

# Planning Lunches at Noon (PLAN) Monthly Webinar Series

Welcome to the February 2026 PLAN Webinar!

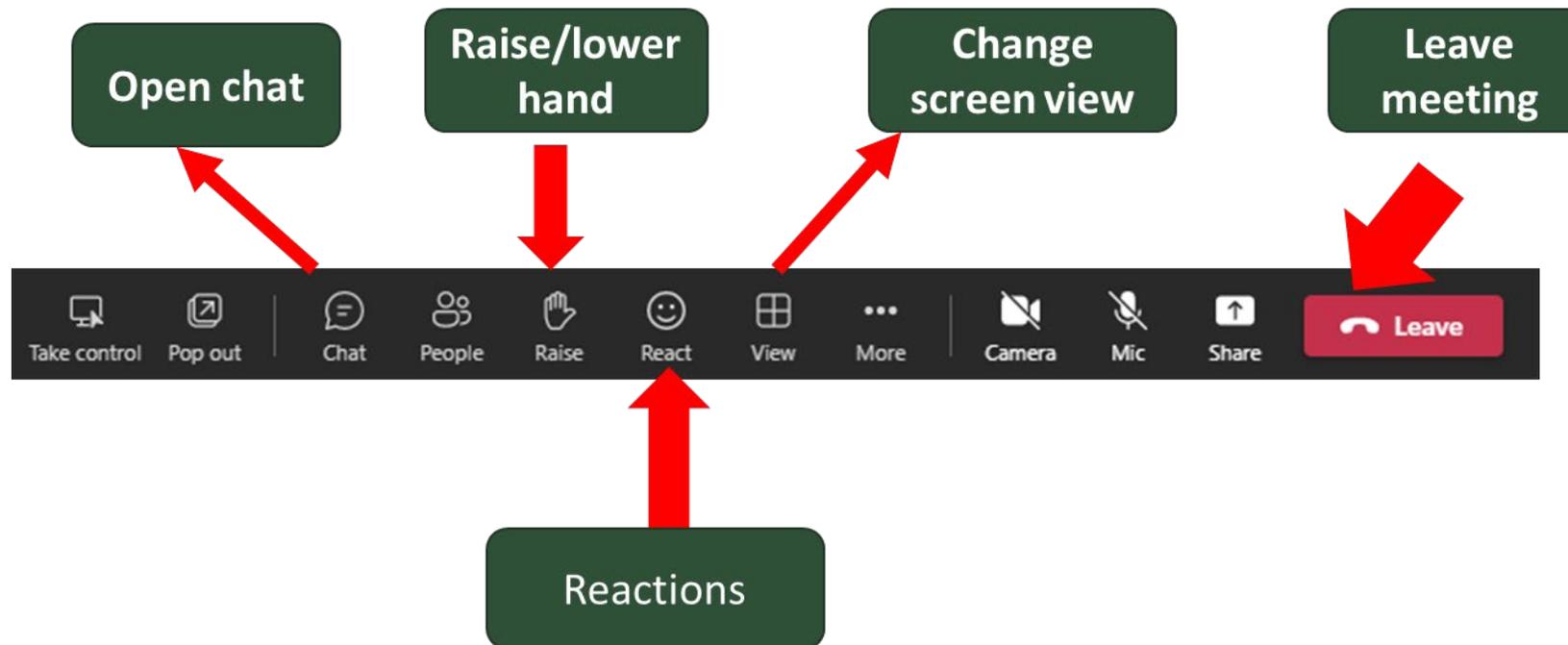
“The ABC’s of Technical Review Committee (TRC)”

Check out OPD’s [Planning and Zoning Training webpage](#) for:

- Slides and recording of past PLAN Webinars and conferences
- Planning Board and Zoning Board 101 slides and recordings
- Planning Board and Zoning Board Handbooks
- Optional Tests and Certificates

# How To Participate

- ▶ For questions, type them into the chat box
- ▶ We will do our best to answer all questions by the end of the webinar



# **The ABC's of Technical Review Committee (TRC)**

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# The ABC's of TRC

## AGENDA

- RSA review related to the planning board, its regulations, and authority
- What is a TRC and its roles and responsibilities?
- Types of TRCs used in the development review process with either approval authority or as an advisory committee
- Municipal examples
- Q&A

# Enabling RSA's

- **673:1 Establishment of Local Land Use Boards. –**
  - I. Any local legislative body (City Council/Town Meeting) may establish a planning board, the members of which shall be residents of the municipality.
    - PB elect officers and adopt By-Laws/Rules of Procedures.
    - PB write and adopt a Master Plan-Vision and Land Use Chapters are required
- **674:35 Power to Regulate Subdivisions. –**
  - I. A municipality may by ordinance or resolution authorize the planning board to require preliminary review of subdivisions....

# RSA's continued



## **674:16 Grant of Power. –**

I. For the purpose of promoting the health, safety, or the general welfare of the community, the local legislative body of any city, town, or county in which there are located unincorporated towns or unorganized places is authorized to adopt or amend a zoning ordinance under the ordinance enactment procedures of RSA 675:2-5.

# RSA's continued

**674:18 Adoption of Zoning Ordinance.** – The local legislative body may adopt a zoning ordinance under RSA 674:16 only after the planning board has adopted the mandatory sections of the master plan as described in RSA 674:2, I and II.



# RSA's continued

## **674:43 Power to Review Site Plans. –**

I. A municipality, having adopted a zoning ordinance as provided in RSA 674:16, and where the planning board has adopted subdivision regulations as provided in RSA 674:36, may by ordinance or resolution further authorize the planning board to require preliminary review of site plans and to review and approve or disapprove site plans for the development or change or expansion of use of tracts for nonresidential uses or for multi-family dwelling units, which are defined as any structures containing more than 2 dwelling units, whether or not such development includes a subdivision or re-subdivision of the site.

**674:43.III** The local legislative body of a municipality may by ordinance or resolution authorize the planning board to delegate its site review powers and duties in regard to minor site plans to a committee of technically qualified administrators...

# RSA 674:43.III

## 674:43.III in full:

The local legislative body of a municipality may by ordinance or resolution authorize the planning board to delegate its site review powers and duties in regard to minor site plans to a committee of technically qualified administrators chosen by the planning board from the departments of public works, engineering, community development, planning, or other similar departments in the municipality. The local legislative body may further stipulate that the committee members be residents of the municipality. This special site review committee may have final authority to approve or disapprove site plans reviewed by it, unless the local legislative body deems that final approval shall rest with the planning board, provided that the decision of the committee may be appealed to the full planning board so long as notice of appeal is filed within 20 days of the committee's decision. All provisions of RSA 676:4 shall apply to actions of the special site review committee, except that such a committee shall act to approve or disapprove within 60 days after submissions of applications, subject to extension or waiver as provided in RSA 676:4, I(f). If a municipality authorizes a site review committee in accordance with this paragraph, the planning board shall adopt or amend its regulations specifying application, acceptance and approval procedures and defining what size and kind of site plans may be reviewed by the site review committee prior to authorizing the committee.

# What is a TRC?

- A committee appointed and authorized by the Legislative bodies of the municipality either by the City Council or Town Meeting vote.
- Legislative bodies determine the type of TRC either with site plan review authority or without review authority.
- Made up of municipal officials, department heads, other board or commission members.
- There is a Chair and Vice-Chair of the TRC. It is an arm of the planning board.



# Roles and Responsibilities of a TRC

- Can be either advisory or have site plan approval authority.
- Part of the development review process.



# Roles and Responsibilities of a TRC

- Provide technical assistance to applicants on the development process.
- Informs all town departments on development projects.
- Create communication with the planning board and municipal departments.

# TRC with Site Plan Approval Authority



- TRC with Approval Authority over Minor Site Plan Review process
  - Planning Board must create criteria for what constitutes minor site plans

# TRC with Site Plan Approval Authority

- TRC should be included in the site plan review regulations.
- TRC should have same rules as planning board i.e., what a completed application should be, approval process, denials, waivers, rules of procedures, meeting dates, application review, and appeal process, etc.



# TRC Approval Authority

- Examples of types of criteria for applications for minor site plan review:
  - New construction or additions for nonresidential buildings between 1,000 and 5,000 sf
  - Change of use in an existing commercial building where no new facilities or utilities are required
  - Construction of new parking spaces or parking lot less than 2000 sf
  - Major Home Business
  - Temporary Events
- Applicant or TRC member can request review in front of planning board at their discretion.

# TRC Approval Authority

- Benefits of a TRC with approval authority:
  - Alleviates the planning board from having to review minor site plans.
  - Streamlines the development process for the applicant.
  - Can save municipality and the developer time and money in the development process.
  - Can provide Conceptual Consultation review input for applicant.



## **TRC as Advisory Committee**

- Set up with municipal authorization
- Designed to provide technical assistance to applicants.
- Streamline the development process.
- Provide review and comment on subdivisions and site plans.

# TRC as Advisory Committee

- Can provide Conceptual Consultation review input for applicant.
- Can save municipality and the developer time and money in the development process.
- Chair of the TRC (or planning staff) reports to planning board on all applications before the TRC.





# Overall Benefits of a TRC

- Fosters cooperation and communication with municipal departments over development projects.
- Inform departments of large projects.
- Can assist departments with budgets and CIP items.
- Can provide Conceptual Consultation review and input.
- Streamline development review process for the developer and municipality

# How to “do” a TRC

- First, it is important to remember the intent of establishing a TRC:
  - Open early communication between the “Town” and the applicant
  - Provide as much feedback and concrete information to the applicant as early in the process as possible
  - Provide as much clarity on what the community is looking for
  - At its most basic level, a TRC provides **information** as **early** as possible for an applicant which leads to better clarity, speed, accuracy, and compliance with regulations.
- Second, there are several models for the establishment of a TRC. Variations include:
  - Where in the timeline
  - Level of meeting flexibility
  - Topic or event-specific, and much more!

# How to “do” a TRC (cont.)

- Should include an invitation to all department heads
- Can include an option to email comments to TRC if department head can't attend or if comments are limited.
  - Also, can allow for “no comment”, department heads have the option to chose to attend or not
- Third party participants for the community (planner, engineer, attorney) can either be paid via escrow by the applicant or by the municipality
- Discussion should include: department head comments relevant to their areas; zoning, regulation, and checklist issues from the PB perspective

# How to “do” a TRC (cont.)

- Minutes or notes should be provided to the Planning Board and other participants either as part of a review memorandum or as a separate document
- Feedback (i.e., a review memo recapping the TRC and any other issues) should be provided to the applicant as soon as possible to allow time for revisions
- Don't consider any new materials submitted after the plans are noticed or after the specified submittal deadline.
- A community can offer/suggest other TRCs to the applicant as needed provided the applicant agrees with additional TRCs that are not formally part of the process (more on this later)

# Allenstown Model

- Takes place after plans submitted
- Meeting scheduled on a flexible basis within a week of submittal
- Includes: department heads, CNHRPC planner, PB Chair, Town Engineer (if needed), Town Attorney (if needed)
- Department heads with no comment can opt out of attending; department heads with simple comments may submit comments via email before the meeting
- Applicant provides escrow for any 3<sup>rd</sup> party participation (planner, engineer, attorney)
- No new material is considered after plans are noticed and the PB meeting (taken up the following meeting)
- If applicant needs more time between TRC and the first meeting they request to be scheduled by the board at a later meeting in writing (i.e. email)
- CNHRPC planner issues 1<sup>st</sup> review memo (PB, TRC, and applicant)
- CNHRPC planner issues 2<sup>nd</sup> review memo after changes are made (PB, TRC, and applicant)
- Other TRCs outside the formal process may be held as needed

# Chichester Model

- Takes place before submittal
- For major site plan and subdivision applications only, recommended for minor
- Includes: department heads, PB Chair, CNHRPC planner, Town Engineer (if needed), Town Attorney (if needed)
- Applicant provides escrow for any 3rd party participation (planner, engineer, attorney)
- CNHRPC planner issues 1st review memo (PB, TRC, and applicant)
- CNHRPC planner issues 2nd review memo after changes are made (PB, TRC, and applicant)
- No new material is considered after plans are noticed and the PB meeting (taken up the following meeting).

# Boscawen Model

- TRC has approval authority delegated for minor site plans
- Process follows typical Planning Board site plan approval process
- Applicant, TRC, or abutters may request Planning Board review
- Appeals are made to the Planning Board
- Membership consists of: Planning and Community Development Director, Building Inspector, Code Enforcement Officer

# Topic Specific/Additional Optional TRCs: Allenstown

- In 2022, 2 large projects included additional, optional TRCs.
- Agreed upon by the TRC and the applicants.
- Recommended by Planner and PB Chair to the applicants.
- One project saw an extra, pre-submittal TRCs take place to identify issues during the early design phase.
- Another project used two pre-application optional TRCs to assist in the design process.
- This second project also held a transportation-specific TRC after the first Planning Board meeting and before the second one to address multiple transportation issues identified at the first PB meeting.
- All of these “optional” TRC meetings included 3<sup>rd</sup> party participants (planner and engineer) paid for by the applicant.

# Topic Specific cont'd

## Special Event TRCs

### Outdoor-Large Gathering Events

Example-Laconia Special Events Review Committee

Utilized for Bike Week-

- Committee member make-up is slightly different from the “regular” TRC- planning, police, fire, water, DPW, Code Enforcement, and Licensing (TC/TC).
- Has the same review and approval authority over site plan applications.
- Has applications, deadlines, meeting schedule
- Can help organize and plan for large outdoor events without burdening the planning board or one department.

# Final Thoughts

- TRC is designed to ensure that information is provided to the applicant as early as possible.
- There are many ways to use the TRC process.
- TRC will result in better clarity for all involved, as well as ensure greater speed, accuracy, and compliance through the application process.
- For communities with TRC after submittal, an applicant that needs more time between TRC and the PB meeting should make such a request in writing.
- Flexibility benefits applicant and municipality
- Assists the planning board in its workload by assuming minor site plan review, conceptual reviews, etc.

# Contact Information

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webinars

Schedule for 2026 upcoming webinars

A short, anonymous online feedback survey

# THANK YOU