

**Southern Windsor County
Regional Planning Commission**

Monthly Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, April 15, 2014
Springfield Town Offices, Springfield, VT

Commissioners Present: Peter Daniels (Chair), Weathersfield; Tom Bock (Vice Chair), Chester; Joe Wilson (Alt.), Springfield; Hal Pyke, West Windsor; Norm Vanasse, Ludlow; Joe Fromberger, Andover; Etienne Ting, Cavendish.

Staff Present: Tom Kennedy, Jason Rasmussen, Dan Potter, Cynthia Porter, Chris Titus.

Guests: Bob Forguites, Springfield.

Peter Daniels called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm.

1. Secretary's Report

- a. *Joe Fromberger made a motion to approve the March 18, 2014 Secretary's Report. Second by Hal Pyke. Passed unanimously.*

2. Treasurer's Report

- a. *Hal Pyke made a motion to accept the March 2014 Treasurer's Report. Seconded by Joe Wilson. Passed unanimously.*
- b. Tom Kennedy indicated that the Budget Committee will need to meet soon to prepare a budget for the next fiscal year. The Brownfields Steering Committee will also need to meet soon to consider renegotiating the loan agreements for 100 River Street.

3. Regional Plan Updates

- a. In order to clarify some possible confusion, Tom Kennedy reviewed the two different planning efforts that are currently underway:
 - A HUD-funded planning effort is being worked on in coordination with TRORC. This effort (i.e. East Central Vermont Consortium) will result in a plan for a more sustainable future for the two regional planning commission areas that generally includes Orange and Windsor Counties. The intent is that the resulting plan will not have effect under Act 250. However, the document should inform our Regional Plan, and the Board can decide how best to incorporate policies and recommendations into the Regional Plan.
 - Ongoing Regional Plan updates involve two primary activities:
 - Addressing sections that were identified as not meeting statutory requirements in the recent assessment conducted by Brandy Saxton. Address those deficiencies is a requirement under our current contract with the Department of Housing and Community Development.

- Improving specificity in the Natural Resources Chapter for better effect in Act 250 and Section 248 proceedings.

Tom Bock noted that, during a recent appeal, Chester's Town Plan was determined by the Court to be too aspirational and vague. That decision highlights the need to tighten up the language if we want it to be meaningful in these State permitting processes.

- b. At the previous meeting, the Board reviewed draft updates to the Plan Relationship section and a proposed new Recreation section. These are intended to address identified deficiencies per Brandy's recent assessment. Tom Kennedy asked the Board to consider preliminarily approving these drafts in order to move forward in the update process. Once all section updates are completed, all updates will be compiled for the formal public hearing and adoption process.

Joe Wilson made a motion to preliminarily approve of the draft Plan Relationship and Recreation updates in the Regional Plan. Etienne Ting seconded the motion. Passed. Peter Daniels abstained since he was not at the previous meeting when these sections were reviewed and discussed.

- c. Dan Potter reviewed draft updates of the goals, policies and recommendation in the Natural Resources Chapter. These updates are intended to streamline the large number of existing goals and policies, as well as to improve the language for effect in Act 250 and Section 248. Jason Rasmussen indicated that *goals* are broad statements that we ultimately want to achieve, *policies* are the standards to help reach the goals, and *recommendations* are actions that the RPC should take. Comments included:

- Define "development" as used in the policies per Act 250 and Section 248 projects.
- Keep the water resources recommendation on funding in the document.
- Reword mineral resources policy #2.

At the next meeting, the Board will revisit these proposed updates and consider preliminary approval of these draft updates. Please email any additional comments to Dan Potter in the next two weeks.

4. Discussion of planning for housing needs in the Region

- a. Jason Rasmussen explained that under our contract with the Department of and Community Development, we are to give a presentation on planning for housing needs and implementation tools. Jason handed out a housing implementation tool checklist and gave a presentation based on information from the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA). There are a number of studies and other resources available to assist in local housing efforts. Preparing housing needs analyses can be complicated, so please ask staff for assistance. There are a broad number of implementation tools, both non-regulatory and regulatory, which are summarized in the checklist and some of which were highlighted in the presentation. VHFA's website (www.housingdata.org) is a great resource. Staff is available to give this presentation to your local boards if desired.

5. Old Business - East Central Vermont Consortium

- a. Jason Rasmussen gave a presentation on local Capital Budgets and Programs. The hand out passed out at this meeting summarizes the requirements and considerations. Many towns are now developing such documents because they are a great tool to identify large future capital expenses, and they can help to even out municipal budgets and avoid large fluctuations in the tax rate from year to year. As part of this HUD-funded effort, a few tools have been developed by TRORC to help with capital budgeting. Please contact staff if interested in these tools.
- b. Dan Potter reviewed the draft East Central Vermont Habitat Conservation Plan developed under the HUD-funded project. Dan was assigned to the HUD Habitat Workgroup which was charged with the development of the Habitat Chapter and consisted of several representatives from throughout the East Central Vermont region. The chapter, which was e-mailed to Board members, sets out a vision statement, several goals, and many recommended actions. Board members should contact Dan if they have any questions or comments.

6. Legislative Update

- a. Tom Kennedy briefly discussed the following bills that seem to be heading towards passage: shoreline protection, downtown incentives bill, agriculture soils definition, telecommunications and energy bills.

7. New Business

- a. None

8. The meeting was adjourned at 1: 45 p.m.