

**Southern Windsor County
Regional Planning Commission**

Minutes of Tuesday, April 19, 2016
Martin Memorial Hall, Ascutney, VT

Commissioners Present: Tom Bock (Chair), Chester; Carol Lighthall (Vice Chair), Baltimore; Joe Wilson (Secretary/Treasurer), Springfield; Walter Martone (Alt.), Springfield; Joe Fromberger, Andover; Tom Kenyon, West Windsor; Hal Pyke (Alt.), West Windsor; Etienne Ting, Cavendish; Kathy Rondeau, Reading; Norm Vanasse, Ludlow.

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

Tom Bock opened the meeting at 12:00 PM.

1. Secretary's Report
 - a. *Carol Lighthall made a motion to approve the March 22, 2016 Secretary's Report as presented. Second by Etienne Ting. Motion passed.*
2. Treasurer's Report
 - a. *Joe Fromberger made a motion to accept the March 2016 Treasurer's Report. Second by Tom Kenyon. Motion passed.*
3. Presentation on Inter-Municipal Agreements
 - a. Tom Kennedy gave a presentation regarding regional services and the pending inter-municipal agreement legislation H.249. He noted that this initially came up in the region as it relates to regional police services. Municipalities are authorized for this already under Chapter 121, however that process is cumbersome. Municipalities can also contract for services, such as West Windsor contracting for police services through Windsor. However, the inter-municipal agreements bill provides an easier process and allows for inter-municipal cooperation. This is enabling legislation; entering into such agreements is voluntary. Many towns struggle to find good, qualified staffing for part time or other positions, such as listers, zoning administrators, dog catchers, etc. An inter-municipal agreement would allow for hiring a full-time position that shares time among a number of communities. If towns so choose, they could opt to ask the regional planning commission to provide these services, if the RPC agrees to do so.
4. Legislative Updates - Energy Siting Bill (S.230)
 - a. Tom Kennedy reported on the energy siting bill as it relates to improving the effect that regional and town plans can have in the Section 248 process. The bill identifies a significant level of detail that would be required for energy sections in regional and town plans to include to better influence the Public Service Board process. A regional plan would need to be certified by the Department of Public Service and a town plan certified by an RPC. Only certified plans would have "substantial deference" in the PSB's decision-making process with Section 248

projects. Non-certified plans would be given only “due consideration”, having much less influence.

5. Creation of a Clean Water Advisory Committee

- a. Dan Potter reviewed a memo that he provided the Board with suggestions for membership of the Clean Water Advisory Committee. The Board agreed to the membership list, with the addition of a member from the Vermont Farm Bureau.

6. New Grants

- a. Tom Kennedy indicated that we anticipate getting an 18 month contract for about \$25,000-\$30,000 to do energy planning.
- b. It also appears that we are getting a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program-funded contract for water quality planning, including activities such as developing project tables with the Clean Water Advisory Committee.
- c. Jason Rasmussen reported that the Better Roads Program (formerly known as the Better Backroads Program) has noticeably increased funding levels. It is one of the important funding sources to help towns address Vermont Clean Water Act requirements. The RPC assisted three towns to submit applications last week to work on transportation inventories. About 10 applications were submitted by towns for construction of water quality-related transportation improvements (e.g. ditching improvements, culvert upgrades, erosion control).

7. New Business

- a. Budget – Tom Kennedy indicated that it is time to start developing the budget for the next fiscal year. The Budget Committee includes the Executive Committee members as well as Joe Fromberger and Kathy Rondeau. All will be notified of the meetings.
- b. Jason Rasmussen and Tom Kennedy discussed a survey for municipal input into whether the state should purchase the hydro facilities along the Connecticut River. Discussion of the merits of public power ensued. Jason will follow up this discussion by emailing Commissioners the survey. Due to a very fast timeline in the Legislature, we ask for comments back by Friday, April 22nd.

8. Old Business

- a. None

9. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:00 PM.