

**Southern Windsor County  
Regional Planning Commission**

---

Monthly Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, October 15, 2013  
Martin Memorial Hall, Ascutney, VT

**Commissioners Present:** Peter Daniels (Chair), Weathersfield; Tom Bock (Vice Chair), Chester; Carol Lighthall (Treasurer), Baltimore; John Mitchell, Reading; Joe Fromberger, Andover; Joe Wilson (Alt.), Springfield; Hal Pyke, West Windsor; Etienne Ting, Cavendish.

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

**Guests:** Jim Esden, VT Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation.

Peter Daniels called the meeting to order at 12:20 pm, following lunch. Chris Titus was welcomed by the Board as the new administrative assistant.

1. Secretary's Report

- a. *Joe Fromberger made a motion to approve the September 17, 2013 meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Carol Lighthall. Passed unanimously. Abstentions by Peter Daniels and Joe Wilson.*

2. Treasurer's Report

- a. *Joe Fromberger made a motion to accept the September 2013 Treasurer's Report, seconded by Tom Bock. Passed unanimously.*

3. Presentation on Vermont Forest Pests – Jim Esden

- a. Tom Kennedy introduced Jim Esden, a forester with the Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation, who gave a presentation on planning for forest pests. Jim Esden provided a handout and discussed highly invasive exotic tree pests, including:
  - 1) Hemlock Woolly Adelgid – already found in Windham and Bennington Counties
  - 2) Emerald Ash Borer – a major threat to ash tree's
  - 3) Asian Longhorned Beetle – a threat to maple and other tree species

Because of the very fast kill rate, the emerald ash borer is driving Vermont's efforts at pest prevention. This bug can kill an ash tree in a few years, and has a 15 year kill rate in an ash tree stand/population. Approximately 3 in 1,000 ash trees are estimated to survive (i.e. "lingering ash"). Windsor County has a very large proportion of ash trees. Transporting infested camp wood is the largest vector for spreading this pest. Impacts of the impending infestation include safety hazards (dead trees), cost of removal (\$400/each), decrease in home values, and loss of street tree canopy. The Department has established an emergency incident command structure for when the emerald ash borer is found in Vermont.

Jim Esden discussed Hartford and Brattleboro as example communities that are developing emergency tree pest plans. The planning process generally includes a tree inventory, establishing a monitoring program, and management actions to

take when an infestation is discovered. A planning template is available by contacting Jim in the Springfield state office building.

4. Update on Brownfields Program

- a. Dan Potter indicated that a sub-grant application for approximately \$100,000 to remediate contamination at the Edgar May Recreation Center site in Springfield is anticipated in the next few months. The remediation would be located outside and next to the pool building. Once remediated, the area would be redeveloped to include a playground area.
- b. Dan also indicated that the 2013 J&L remediation project is 95% complete and that the \$400,000 ARRA Subgrant to SRDC has been completed.

5. Staff Activity Report

- a. Tom Kennedy provided a handout that includes descriptions of current staff activities that are ongoing. This is being provided in order to illustrate the broad variety of staff tasks and to keep the Board informed on ongoing activities. It is the intent to provide staff activity reports on a quarterly basis.

6. Draft Title VI Plan

- a. Jason Rasmussen indicated that, as recipients of federal money, the SWCRPC is subject to nondiscrimination rules under the Civil Rights Act and other federal requirements. These requirements prohibit discrimination, and require that no person be excluded from or denied benefits from our planning activities based on the grounds of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. The draft plan describes this in more detail and includes a complaint form and procedures to respond to complaints. Staff will ask Jonathan Goddard to review this draft plan, include all specified Appendices, and provide a final draft for the Board's consideration at the next meeting.

7. Draft HUD Housing Plan

- a. Dan Potter provided an overview of our HUD-funded planning effort. The SWCRPC received \$41,000 to assist the TRORC in developing a plan for their HUD Sustainable Communities grant. The result of this overall HUD-funded effort will be a plan for the combined area of southern Windsor County and Two Rivers-Ottauquechee regions. The resulting plan is not the SWCRPC's Regional Plan and will not have regulatory effect under Act 250 or Section 248. However, the Board may consider incorporating HUD plan policies into the Regional Plan.

Under this grant, the Vermont Housing Finance Agency developed a housing needs analysis of this east central Vermont area. Dan discussed highlights of that document:

- 1) 30% of households (and 50% of renters) are cost-burdened. Cost burdened was defined as spending 30% or more on housing expenses.
- 2) Region needs more/better rental options
- 3) Commuting and home heating also contribute to reduce home affordability in this region

- 4) There is demand for low-income, non-senior housing in this region.
- 5) Nearly all of the region's assisted rental housing is located in the four largest towns - Springfield, Hartford, Randolph, and Windsor.
- 6) Home prices in the region have risen more slowly than the state average following the recession.
- 7) Of the 52 shared equity homes in the East Central Vermont Region, the SWCRPC Region hosts 47 of them.
- 8) The majority of the housing work-group's goals, policies, and recommendations align with the findings of the study, but a few need refinements.

There are a number of working groups established to help guide this HUD-funded planning effort. The Housing working group was first to complete a draft plan and policies. Each section will be reviewed at subsequent Board meetings. Draft housing policies were provided for the Board's consideration. A few policies were discussed; however, more time is needed for comments. Comments may be provided to Dan at any time or compiled at the next Board meeting.

8. Old Business

- a. Nothing to report

9. New Business

- a. Tom Kennedy summarized upcoming events:

- 1) October 15<sup>th</sup> Current Use Meeting in Springfield
- 2) October 16<sup>th</sup> Transportation Board Public Hearing in Springfield
- 3) October 28-29 Renewable Energy Conference in Burlington
- 4) December 7<sup>th</sup> VECAN Energy Conference in Fairlee

10. The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.