

**Southern Windsor County
Regional Planning Commission**

Minutes of Tuesday, November 15, 2016
Martin Memorial Hall, Ascutney, VT

Commissioners Present: Tom Bock (Chair), Chester; Joe Fromberger, Andover; Wayne Wheelock, Baltimore; Walter Martone (Alt.), Springfield; Peter Daniels, Weathersfield.

Staff Present: Tom Kennedy, Allison Hopkins, Jason Rasmussen, Dan Potter, Cynthia Porter.

Others Present: Char Osterlund, Howard Beach, Jeff Pelton, Marie Caduto.

Tom Bock opened the meeting at 12:15 PM.

1. Secretary's Report
 - a. *Joe Fromberger made a motion to approve the October 20, 2016 Secretary's Report. Second by Walter Martone. Motion passed.*
2. Treasurer's Report
 - a. *Peter Daniels made a motion to accept the October 2016 Treasurer's Report. Second by Walter Martone. Motion passed.*
 - b. The Board would like to see more financial details about the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste District (GUV) six months into the fiscal year. At the January RPC meeting, staff will present profit and loss information for the GUV profit center.
3. Basin 10 Plan Update Presentation
 - a. Marie Caduto (Watershed Coordinator, VT DEC) presented information about the ongoing update to the Tactical Basin Plan for Basin 10. Basin 10 includes the watersheds for the Black River, Ottauquechee River and the smaller streams located between them, such as Mill Brook. These plans are updated every 5-years. A focus for new plan updates is to identify specific projects that will benefit water quality in each watershed. Projects identified in these plans will be eligible for state funding programs, notably the Ecosystem Restoration Program. As such, it is important for municipalities to provide input regarding important local projects. Marie indicated that she is looking for high-impact projects and overarching priorities for the region. Input can be provided over the next 6 months.
 - b. The RPC Clean Water Advisory Committee was established to help to identify and prioritize projects.
4. Discussion of Energy Standards and Goals for Town and Regional Plans
 - a. Jason Rasmussen presented information on Act 174 and the new energy planning standards recently finalized by the Department of Public Service. Act 174 expanded the state planning goal regarding energy. Municipal plans updated/adopted at this point need to be consistent with the new language, which now includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions and identifying areas that are suitable for renewable energy generation.

- b. Act 174 also enables municipalities and RPCs to get “substantial deference” for energy siting projects that are approved by the Public Service Board. It is optional. In order to get “substantial deference”, regional and municipal plans must meet the new standards created by the Department of Public Service.
 - c. Updates to the energy element of the Regional Plan are currently underway. The resulting data analysis and mapping will be a basis for local energy plans, if towns wish to pursue that. The RPC will be getting a new contract soon that will enable staff to assist about three towns with town energy planning updates.
 - d. A public meeting to learn more about energy siting standards is being planned for Dec. 8th at 6:30 pm. Information about that meeting will be sent out soon, along with an abbreviated version of the municipal plan standards.
5. Discussion of the Recent Supreme Court Decision on Regional Plans in Act 250 (I-89 Exit 1 in Quechee)
 - a. Tom Kennedy reported that the VT Supreme Court’s decision on B&M Realty LLC vs. Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission was recently released. This case is commonly referred to as the Exit 1 Quechee Highland’s case. This decision is very well written and provides clarity to all parties regarding issues of vested rights and the definition of substantial regional impact when there is conflict between a regional and municipal plan. The Court also provided clear guidance about the need for a regional plan to be both flexible and broad while providing clear guidance for future development
 - b. A number of VT RPCs, including the SWCRPC, hired an attorney together to file an amicus brief. The SWCRPC share of the costs was approximately \$3,500.
6. Creation of a Committee for Regional Plan Land Use Chapter Updates
 - a. Updating the land use chapter of the Regional Plan was discussed at the previous meeting. Jason Rasmussen presented the idea of creating a committee to get additional input and help to inform the update process. Additional information will be presented at the January meeting about the purpose of the committee and potential membership.
7. New Business
 - a. Tom Kennedy noted with sadness that Dan Potter is leaving for a new job that is closer to where he lives. Dan will be working with the Department of Public Service starting in early December. There will be a farewell gathering for Dan at Harpoon on Nov. 30th at 4 pm.
 - b. Please RSVP for the SWCRPC holiday event on December 15th at the Windsor Mansion Inn located on Juniper Hill Road (<https://windsormansioninn.com/>).
8. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:30 PM.