

**Southern Windsor County
Regional Planning Commission**

Minutes of Tuesday, January 16, 2017
Springfield Town Offices, Springfield, VT

Commissioners Present: Tom Bock (Chair), Chester; Wayne Wheelock, Baltimore; Joe Wilson, Springfield; Walter Martone (Alt.), Springfield; Peter Daniels, Weathersfield; Kathy Rondeau, Reading.

Staff Present: Tom Kennedy, Jason Rasmussen.

Others Present: Char Osterlund.

Tom Bock opened the meeting at 12:15 PM.

1. Changes to the Agenda
 - a. A corporate resolution is not needed at this time. It was deleted from the agenda.
 - b. Legislative updates will be discussed under new business.
2. Secretary's Report
 - a. *Peter Daniels made a motion to approve the November 15, 2016 Secretary's Report. Second by Kathy Rondeau. Joe Wilson abstained. Motion passed.*
3. Treasurer's Report
 - a. *Peter Daniels made a motion to accept the November 2016 Treasurer's Report. Second by Joe Wilson. Motion passed.*
 - b. Tom Kennedy reviewed a handout that showed profit and loss financial details of our contract work with the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste District (GUV). Things are going well, although it is a challenge to manage three organizations.
4. Seek Nominations for Vacant Vice Chair Position
 - a. Tom Kennedy noted that Carol Lighthall has taken a job in Barre. She had been Vice Chair before leaving the RPC Board. Wayne Wheelock has replaced Carol as Baltimore's representative, but the Vice Chair position remains vacant. We are looking for a volunteer to serve as Vice Chair through June 2017. Peter Daniels is willing to serve through June. This will be voted on at the next meeting.
5. Committee for Regional Plan Land Use Update
 - a. Jason Rasmussen discussed the memo that was included in the agenda packet. Staff is recommending the creation of an advisory committee to help inform the Land Use Chapter update process and make recommendations to the RPC Board. Committee membership should be limited to no more than 10 people. Members might include representatives from the SWCRPC Board, town planning commissions, town staff, state employees and/or partner organizations. The Board agreed that this is a good idea.

- b. *Peter Daniels made a motion to create a Land Use Advisory Committee to help inform the Regional Plan Land Use Chapter update and to make recommendations to the SWCRPC Board. Second by Wayne Wheelock. Motion passed.*
 - c. Tom Kennedy noted that the RPC has net income at this time (see the profit and loss statement). In order to help staff to complete this update, Tom Kennedy suggested spending up to \$10,000 to hire a planning consultant to help to write the Land Use Chapter. Staff will follow the appropriate procurement process to hire a consultant.
 - d. *Joe Wilson made a motion to approve hiring a qualified professional planner to assist with the Regional Plan update for an amount not to exceed \$10,000. Second by Peter Daniels. Motion passed.*
6. Technical Assistance with Enhanced Town Energy Plans
- a. Jason Rasmussen noted that a memo was sent out asking for letters of intent to be submitted by towns that are interested in the RPC's help to develop enhanced local energy plans that are consistent with Act 174. Our limited funds allow us to assist only three towns between now and July 2017. We are hoping to get funding to assist more towns in the next year. Ideally, we would like to help all ten towns with this over the next few years.
 - b. Criteria for selection involved interest by both the Select Board and Planning Commission, capacity to take this on at this time, and other factors highlighted in the memo.
 - c. Letters were received from Andover, Cavendish, Chester, Ludlow and Springfield. It was noted that Springfield expressed significant levels of interest. Andover is particularly impacted by the potential for wind. With the Coolidge Substation and transmission lines, Ludlow is seeing interest in renewable energy development. Cavendish has a very capable Energy Committee that can write their own plan with data, maps and limited guidance from the RPC. Chester's Select Board supports this effort. Chester's Planning Commission meets tonight, but town staff conducted a poll of members and they support this effort. We want to help Chester as well, but we just don't have capacity at this time.
 - d. *Joe Wilson made a motion to accept the staff recommendation and select Andover, Ludlow and Springfield for assistance with enhanced local energy plans this year. Second by Peter Daniels. Motion passed.*
7. Brownfields – Approve Ascutney Outdoors Sub-Grant Agreement
- a. Tom Kennedy discussed the draft sub-grant agreement to Ascutney Outdoors for asbestos abatement at the former Mt. Ascutney base lodge. Tom also summarized the most recent estimates of the associated project costs. The Board expressed support for this project.
 - b. *Peter Daniels made a motion to approve the proposed sub-grant to Ascutney Outdoors for up to \$70,000, with a 20% match, for Ascutney base lodge asbestos abatement. Second by Kathy Rondeau. Motion passed.*
8. Draft RPC Letter Regarding TransCanada

- a. Walter Martone indicated that the Mt Ascutney River Subcommittee is asking towns to consider a warrant article seeking support for requiring an enhancement and mitigation fund as part of the FERC re-licensing process for the southern Connecticut River dams (i.e. Wilder, Bellows Falls, Vernon). Jason Rasmussen noted that the Connecticut River Joint Commissions is following this closely and wants to see such a fund created. The proposed fund would be similar to the one created for the 15 Mile Falls project, and could fund a variety of projects (e.g. mitigation of erosion problems, recreational enhancements).
 - b. Jason Rasmussen discussed the draft letter included in the agenda packet. TransCanada recently submitted to FERC their Preliminary Licensing Proposal for the three dams along the southern portion of the Connecticut River. In it, they essentially call for maintaining the status quo on dam operations, recreational facilities, etc. The draft letter would be signed by the RPCs along the affected portion of the Connecticut River.
 - c. *Peter Daniels made a motion to authorize the Chair to sign the letter, and to suggest the addition of the need to create an enhancement and mitigation fund, and the precedence for it. Second by Joe Wilson. Motion passed.*
9. Request for Intervener Status for Ludlow Solar Project
- a. Jason Rasmussen and Tom Kennedy discussed the 496 kW solar project that is being proposed off VT Route 100 North in Ludlow. The RPC will pursue intervener status in order to comment on issues, such as landscaping/maintenance, reclamation, and the footnote about modifying the number of panels and their configuration.
 - b. *Peter Daniels made a motion to authorize staff to file a motion to intervene for the 496 kW Ludlow Driver Solar LLC project that is currently under Section 248 review. Second by Joe Wilson. Motion passed.*
10. Old Business
- a. None.
11. New Business
- a. Tom Kennedy said that the State, now under new leadership, is looking at ways to improve governmental efficiencies. It appears that the RPC/RDC consolidation discussion is coming back this legislative session.
 - b. During the legislative session, RPC Board meetings will be on the third Monday of each month.
12. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:30 PM.