

**Southern Windsor County
Regional Planning Commission**

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

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

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

Tom Bock opened the meeting at 12:20 PM.

Tom Bock welcomed Kathy Rondeau to the Board as Reading's new representative. Introductions were made.

1. Secretary's Report
 - a. *Joe Wilson made a motion to approve the November 17, 2015 Secretary's Report. Second by Norm Vanasse. Motion passed. Joe Fromberger abstained.*
2. Treasurer's Report
 - a. December 2015 Treasurer's Report:
 - 1) *Joe Fromberger made a motion to accept the December 2015 Treasurer's Report. Second by Tom Kenyon. Motion passed.*
 - b. FY 2015 Audit Report:
 - 1) Tom Kennedy reported on the management letter to the Board. Cynthia Porter discussed the adjusting entries made by the auditors.
 - 2) *Joe Wilson made a motion to accept the FY 2015 Audit Report. Second by Tom Kenyon. Motion passed.*
 - c. Tom Kennedy reported on hiring a new auditor:
 - 1) We have used Fothergill, Segale and Valley as our auditor since the mid-1990s.
 - 2) We released an RFP in the fall of 2015.
 - 3) We received four proposals.
 - 4) The Executive Committee decided to hire Sullivan and Powers, a firm that is used by a number of other RPCs.
3. Discussion of Section 248 proposals
 - a. Tom Kennedy provided an update about the Ranger Solar project in Ludlow, a 20 MW ground-mounted solar project that encompasses about 90 acres adjacent to the Coolidge Substation. The Selectboard voted to support the project recently. GMP and VELCO may have some concerns regarding the project. The

Board previously decided to intervene, as this is such a large project. Staff will meet with the Permit Review Committee to review the petition. There was consensus on these next steps.

- b. Staff reported that the TDI transmission line project received a Certificate of Public Good. This line will bring electricity from Hydro Quebec through an underground/under water transmission line that terminates at the Coolidge Substation.
 - c. Dan Potter reviewed staff comments on the proposed changes to the net-metering rules. A letter that documents those comments was included in the agenda packet.
 - d. Dan Potter reviewed comments submitted regarding the proposed 500KW solar project off of Ski Tow Road in Brownsville. A letter that documents those comments was included in the agenda packet.
4. Act 250 Applications
- a. Tom Kennedy discussed how the SWCRPC might participate in the Supreme Court proceedings regarding an appeal of the I-91 Exit 1 project (i.e. B&M Realty, LLP) decision. A copy of the Environmental Court's decision on that project was included in the agenda packet. In coordination with other RPCs and partner organizations, the SWCRPC plans to file an amicus brief on the required specificity of regional plans as it relates to Act 250 criterion 10. This proposed action by the SWCRPC has nothing to do with the merits of the project. The Executive Committee agreed that participating in this amicus brief made sense, but that the Board should vote on it.

Joe Fromberger made a motion for the SWCRPC to participate in preparing an amicus brief for the Supreme Court proceedings on an appeal of the B&M Realty, LLP decision as it relates to the specificity required of regional plans under Act 250 criterion 10. Second by Etienne Ting. Motion passed.

5. Discussion of Vermont Clean Water Act and the role of RPCs
- a. Tom Kennedy reported that over the next few years, towns will hear a lot about the Vermont Water Quality Act (Act 64) and the associated requirements for town governments. The RPCs are working to assist ANR with outreach to towns regarding this Act.

Dan Potter gave a presentation regarding the Act and the implications for towns. The new law seeks to improve water quality statewide with implications for farming, impervious surfaces of 3 or more acres, forestry, river corridors and public infrastructure. Towns will be impacted with respect to municipal roads, municipal water and sewer systems, and municipal lands that involve 3 or more acres of impervious surfaces. Tactical basin plans will be an important basis for funding projects through the Vermont Clean Water Initiative. Staff are visiting selectboards over the winter to inform them about this Act.

6. Update on the new Federal Transportation Bill (FAST Act)
 - a. Tom Kennedy gave a brief update on the new multi-year Federal Transportation Bill that will fund roads, transit and railroad programs. A press release from VTrans was included in the agenda packet for more information.
7. New Business
 - a. Tom Kennedy discussed the COG bill (H.249) that would authorize the creation of a Council of Governments which would help to facilitate intermunicipal services. Creation of COGs would be voluntary. It would allow regional planning commission to enter into an agreement with its member municipalities to create a regional council of government. COGs would not have authority to impose taxes or eminent domain.
8. Old Business - None
9. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:11 PM.