



MINUTES

September 19, 2013

6:00 PM

Bromley Mountain Base Lodge - Peru, VT

Commissioners: Lee Krohn (Manchester), Mike Oltedal (Dorset), Dan Monks (Bennington), Judy Boehlert (Sandgate), Janet Hurley (Manchester Village), Walt Klinger (Pownal), Tyler Yandow (Dorset), Keith Squires (Arlington), Bill Deveneau (Bennington), Ed Shea (Woodford), Paul Myers (Peru), Bill Pennebaker (Shaftsbury), Bruce Lierman (Transportation), Suzy dePeyster (Sandgate) / Voting on plan approval and confirmation by absentee ballot: Phil Chapman (Rupert), Jerry Hassett (Landgrove), Charlie Rockwell (Rupert), Meg Cottam (Glastenbury), Scott Printz (Energy)

BCRC Staff: Jim Sullivan, Jim Henderson, Michael Batchter, Mark Anders, Bill Colvin, Allison Langsdale, Mickey McGlasson (Americorps VISTA)

Municipal Officials/Others: Joann Eerenhouse, Margy Becker, Mitchel Race, Donald Campbell, Donald Brodie, Leslie Addison, Eleanor Lacross, Barry Brown, Al Michaels

1. BCRC Chair Dan Monks welcomed those in attendance and asked staff to provide information on several upcoming events: T-Board hearing on October 22, VT ANR "Biofinder" mapping program training next week at BBA, "Walkable Bennington" event with Mark Fenton on October 24, and a presentation on a proposed Southern Vermont marketing plan in November.
2. Monks introduced Mickey McGlasson, an Americorps VISTA worker who is spending the year with BCRC working on a variety of healthy community initiatives.
3. Approval of July Minutes: Motion to approve as presented (Shea). Second (Boehlert). Passed unanimously.
4. Public Hearing to Consider Approval of the North Bennington and Arlington municipal plans

Monks noted that staff reports and committee reviews recommend approval. Following brief discussion, the hearing was closed.

Motion (Krohn): Approve the NB and Arlington municipal plans and confirm the planning processes of those two municipalities. Second (Shea). Passed unanimously.

5. Regional Plan Update Process

Monks introduced Janet Hurley who will be heading up the committee overseeing the update. Janet is BCRC's commissioner from Manchester Village. She worked as a research biologist for many years and also has held a number of planning positions in Vermont (Westford, Milton, South Burlington) and worked at the UVM Spatila Analysis Lab.

Comments from Janet Hurley:

Seeking broad input from throughout the region - geographically and interests. Hoping to make the document more dynamic and usable, better presence on the web, and an easier and more compelling read with a narrative thread throughout the text. Discussed the unique "Northshire/Southshire" nature of the region as a potential unifying theme. Of course, the plan will reflect current conditions, data, and statutory requirements.

Noted that this is a great opportunity for commissioners to have a real input on the future of the region. Encouraged volunteers for the committee; will limit number of meetings and will do a lot of communicating and sharing information via the internet.

Jim Sullivan provided an overview of statutory requirements and the current (2007) Regional Plan (see attached presentation).

Summary of comments from those present:

- Economic Development:
 - What are the current economic drivers in the region? Which sectors are most significant now?
 - Changes to infrastructure priorities – telecomm and broadband issues.
 - Discussion of workforce development could be expanded.
 - Significance of home-based businesses. Can we quantify how many and what types of businesses?
 - Look to what is possible and what we want in addition to what we have now.
 - Significance of history and historical resources to economic development.
 - Build on regional assets.
 - Regional-level SWOT analysis.
- Natural Resources:
 - Solid waste should perhaps be noted as a "resource" instead of "waste" (recyclables, compost).
 - Should improve accuracy of geographic data (wetlands, flood hazard areas, etc.)
 - Climate change – implications for resources and use of resources.
- Land Use:
 - Incorporate new village center, downtown, growth center designations.
 - Should land use districts be better defined (e.g., parcel lines or other definite boundaries) for villages – as they are for urban centers and upland forests?
 - Historic Preservation - decay of historic structures a real problem in many communities. New tools are needed. Cost of private investment to save these critical resources is often prohibitive. Importance of these resources to the sense of community and attractiveness of the area is profound. To what extent is it ok to replace historic structures with similar buildings that serve the same function(s)?
- Energy:
 - Should incorporate the 2009 Bennington Regional Energy Plan (main points and include by reference).
 - New information on electricity generation and transmission / Vermont Yankee closing.

- Importance of distributed generation and smart grid.
- Current plan quite positive on renewable technologies, including wind – current feelings?
- More emphasis on biomass for space heating applications.
- Transportation
 - BCRC has a Regional Transportation Plan and a Regional Transportation Project Guide – should incorporate both into the plan update.
 - Rail – put more emphasis on service using the B&M line that goes through Pownal.
 - More focus on public transit – moving people conveniently and efficiently without worrying as much about the mode.
 - Revisioning streets as important transportation corridors and public spaces for people (not just cars and trucks).
- Public Utilities, Facilities, and Services
 - Identify specific improvement projects that support regional goals? Include municipal projects. Focus on threatened/stressed infrastructure.
 - Incorporate scenario planning to see what is needed under various future conditions (e.g., shortage of imported energy).
- Housing
 - Discussed need to access more recent data to properly characterize the region’s housing conditions and needs. In some places the concern is with affordability in others with quality and location of housing.
 - Involve John Broderick of Shires Housing (BCRC’s housing interest commissioner) in the discussion.

Sullivan and Hurley asked for volunteers to serve on the plan update committee. Bruce Lierman, Judy Boehlert, Paul Myers, and Tyler Yandow agreed to help.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Sullivan