

**CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE
JUNE 29, 2016
MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission's Project Review Committee was held on Wednesday, June 29, 2016 in the Conference Room of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.

Committee Members Present:

Byron Atwood, Chair –	Town of Barre Town
Richard Payne –	Town of Cabot
Brian Fitzgerald –	Town of Duxbury, Alternate
Laura Hill-Eubanks –	Town of Northfield
Larry Hebert –	Town of Williamstown
Jamie Stewart –	Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation

Committee Members Absent:

Bon Wernecke –	Town of Berlin
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Others Present:

Ron Krauth –	Town of Middlesex
Ron Lyon –	DuBois & King
Norm St. Onge –	Northfield University
Derek Moretz –	Encore Renewable Energy
Eric Vorwald, AICP –	CVRPC Senior Planner

CALL TO ORDER

With a full quorum present, Mr. Atwood called the meeting to order at 4:02pm. Members of the committee and the public that were present introduced themselves.

CHANGES OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Mr. Vorwald noted that the representative for the Moretown Landfill was unable to attend the meeting and the representative for the ER Thurston Solar Farm West, LLC. was going to be late. With that in mind, Mr. Vorwald recommended that the Norwich University project be discussed first since representatives for that project were in attendance. All were in agreement. There were no other changes or amendments noted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Ms. Hill-Eubanks and seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve the January 21, 2016 minutes with changes noted. The motion was passed by a vote of 2 – 0 – 3 with Messrs. Atwood, Payne, and Hebert abstaining as they were not in attendance.

REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS & PETITIONS THAT MAY QUALIFY FOR SUBSTANTIAL REGIONAL IMPACT

Mr. Vorwald provided the committee with an overview of the Act 250 application for Norwich University noting that the project included the razing of two existing maintenance buildings and the construction of one building that would be used for engineering classroom space and maintenance. The new building would utilize approximately the same footprint as the two existing buildings and would have no net impact on parking or circulation within the site.

Messrs. Lyon and St. Onge provided additional information related to the project and Norwich University noting that the project would accommodate existing uses and no new programs were being created to necessitate this building construction. It was also noted that additional landscaping was being added to accommodate concerns from the neighbors near the site.

The Project Review Committee discussed additional aspects of the project. After this discussion Ms. Hill-Eubanks made a motion that staff provide a letter to the applicant indicating that the project, as presented, does not meet the thresholds for Substantial Regional Impact, which was seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 5 – 0 with no additional discussion.

Following the discussion of Norwich University, Ms. Hill-Eubanks noted that she had a conflict of interest with the Moretown Landfill project and would be abstaining from discussion. Mr. Vorwald presented an overview of the Moretown Landfill Closure project noting that a closure plan was in place that had been approved by Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. He also noted that the application was for very specific tenants of the project related to air pollution, waste disposal, and aesthetics. Mr. Vorwald provided the committee with an overview of several renderings that were provided by the applicant to indicate the aesthetics of the project.

Following discussion from the committee Mr. Fitzgerald made a motion that staff provide a letter to the applicant indicating that the project, as presented, does not meet the thresholds for Substantial Regional Impact, which was seconded by Mr. Hebert. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0-1 with Ms. Hill-Eubanks abstaining and no additional discussion.

With the applicant for the final project not yet present, the committee agreed to continue with the agenda and come back to the final project when the applicant arrived.

REVIEW OF POLICIES & PROCEDURES AND THRESHOLDS FOR SUBSTANTIAL REGIONAL IMPACT

Mr. Vorwald provided an overview of the policies and procedures that the committee has been working on over the past year. He noted that the committee forwarded a draft to the Executive Committee for their input, which was returned with several comments for discussion. Mr. Vorwald highlighted several of those comments. The committee discussed options to strengthen the language and directed staff to develop draft language that could be used. Finally, the committee noted that further discussion should include Mr. Wernecke since he was heavily involved with the draft language.

REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS & PETITIONS THAT MAY QUALIFY FOR SUBSTANTIAL REGIONAL IMPACT

With discussion of the policies and procedures concluded, the committee asked for staff to present the final application for consideration since the applicant had not yet arrived. Mr. Vorwald provided an overview of the ER Thurston Solar Farm West project noting that it was a 500 kW solar project on 3.5 acres. He indicated that reason it was on the agenda for discussion was that the development would encroach in the buffer area for a deer wintering yard.

Mr. Vorwald noted that he had discussions with the applicant who indicated that the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) had reviewed the plans and concluded that the deer wintering yard buffer area would not be impacted. ANR asked that three conditions be include with the Certificate of Public Good that included no cutting of the trees in the deer wintering area, the installation of a fence that would not adversely impact the deer populations, and prohibit activities on the site from mid-December to mid-April. During this discussion the applicant had arrived. Mr. Moretz noted that they had agreed to comply with the conditions put forth by ANR. Additional discussion occurred on the project with the applicant.

Following discussion from the committee Mr. Fitzgerald made a motion that staff provide a letter to the applicant indicating that the project, as presented, does not meet the thresholds for Substantial Regional Impact, which was seconded by Mr. Hebert. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0-with no additional discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

With no additional business to discuss, Mr. Atwood called for a motion to adjourn which was offered by Mr. Hebert and seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald. The motion was passed by a vote of 5-0 with no additional discussion at 5:42pm.