

**Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission  
June 9, 2015  
DRAFT Minutes**

Present were:

Barre City: Janet Shatney-absent

Plainfield: David Strong

Robert Atchinson-absent

Barre Town: Byron Atwood

Roxbury:

Mark Nicholson-absent

Waitsfield: Don La Haye

Harrison Snapp-absent

Berlin: Bob Wernecke

Warren: Camilla Behn

Cabot: Dick Payne

Washington: Gary Winders-absent

Calais: Paul Rose

Waterbury: Steve Lotspeich

John Brabant-absent

Williamstown: Larry Hebert

Duxbury: Brian Fitzgerald

Woodbury:

East Montpelier: Julie Potter

Worcester: Bill Arrand-absent

Jack Pauly

Fayston: Carol Chamberlin-absent

Marshfield:

Middlesex: Ronald Krauth

Montpelier: Tina Ruth

Kim Cheney-absent

Moretown: Dara Torre

Northfield: Laura Hill-Eubanks

Orange: George Malek

Staff: L. Emery, G. Aloisio, D. Currier

Others: Lee Cattaneo, Town of Orange

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

The minutes of the May 12, 2015 CVRPC meeting were accepted as written.

Staff Report Additions: The Chair noted that Bonnie Waninger is on medical leave due to issues with her back.

Appointments of Standing Members of the Project Review Committee and Town Plan Review Committee, and to VAPDA and VEPC: J. Potter, as Vice-Chair, discussed the process for the annual appointment of members to the Commission's standing committees and other organizations. The Project Review Committee has five standing members with three year staggered terms, and an alternate. The Committee reviews Act 250 and Section 248 projects for conformance with the Regional Plan. R. Wernecke's term on the Committee is expiring, although he is interested in continuing to serve on the Committee. There is opportunity for others if anyone is interested.

The Town Plan Review Committee is five members each for one year. The Committee reviews municipal plans and recommends approval to the Commission. Commissioners can be added to the Committee for a single plan review if they are from the town being reviewed or adjoining towns.

VAPDA (VT Association of Planning and Development Agencies) includes representation by the Executive Director and the Chair of the Commission.

VEPC (VT Economic Progress Council) includes representation by the Executive Director.

The appointments to both committees and the two outside organizations are done annually in June. The Executive

Committee agreed to make these appointments in July in order to allow other Commissioners the opportunity to express their interest in serving on the standing committees of CVRPC.

CVRPC also has a Brownfields initiative committee which will be reconstituted now that we have an EPA Brownfields assessment grant.

In addition to the above committees, there are the Regional Plan Draft Review Committee and the associated topic working groups. Other committees can be established as may be needed.

Commissioners are encouraged to participate. Committee members need to attend the committee meetings so that the work can be accomplished.

It was suggested that all committee agendas and minutes, including the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), be provided to all Commissioners via email when they are prepared for the committees. (TAC agendas and minutes are routinely sent to all Commissioners.) This would help keep Commissioners fully informed of the Commission's activities.

Convene Second Public Hearing on the Amendments to the 2008 Regional Plan: The hearing was convened at 7:10 p.m. No members of the public were in attendance. (Leo Cattaneo joined the hearing while it was in progress.) The 2008 Regional Plan is being amended to meet requirements of our contract with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. (The adoption of amendments to the 2008 Regional Plan does not extend the life of the Plan; it will still expire in September 2016.) The process that is being used to amend the 2008 Regional Plan (and also develop the 2016 Plan) includes working groups which provide input on the amendments and the Regional Plan Draft Review Committee which provides further comments and recommends acceptance to the Commission. Staff and the Committees have developed the amendment language through a public outreach process and expanded use of the Commission's web site, as well as interactive mapping of comments received from the public.

The 2008 Regional Plan elements to be amended include: Economic; Utilities, Facilities and Services; and Land Use with the addition of a future land use map. The Economic, and Utilities, Facilities and Services elements have been accepted by the Commission at previous meetings (November 2014 and April 2015). The focus tonight is to receive any additional comments on those elements and discuss suggested amendments. The new language for each of the elements has been integrated into its 2008 Regional Plan element. The suggested language outlined in the "comment and response document" provided for tonight's meeting has not been incorporated yet. Once those suggestions are agreed to and/or modified, they will be incorporated.

It should be noted that the statute requires that if any changes are made to the Regional Plan amendments as warned, a new hearing must be warned and held to receive comments on the new changes. This differs from the requirement for changes made to a municipal plan in that the municipal plan changes to a warned document have to be "substantial" in nature before a further hearing would be required.

The Department of Housing and Community Development of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development has reviewed the proposed amendments to the 2008 Regional Plan and found that they are sufficient to repair the deficiencies for the 2008 Plan.

*Utilities, Facilities and Services Element:* There were no additional comments to be made on this element.

*Economic Element:* We did not previously receive any written comments on the Economic Element. Several comments were received at this hearing, including the following:

- Page 7-9 livable wage definition; not sure this agrees with the footnote on page 7-18.
- 7-11 What is socially irresponsible versus socially responsible?

- 7-13 policy 3: What's the difference between sustainable economic development and unsustainable?
- 7-14: B. Not all sectors that may be poised for growth are named, such as textile manufacturing.
- 7-14 A: Seems negative regarding larger business development.
- 7-16 D: Concerned that "guide and assist" will become "require" in the next Plan. If we are going to help municipalities, we need to better define what the guidance and assistance would be.

Comments will be further discussed during the deliberative session at the close of the hearing once all comments have been made.

*Land Use Element and Future Land Use Map:* Barre Town officials are concerned about the Regional Plan being too directive with towns losing local control as a result. The Town doesn't want the Region or the State telling the Town how it will or won't grow. Will towns be able to have more than one town center? Barre Town is spread around Barre City and as a result has no central center. There is also concern about the land use map becoming a zoning map, or being used as such in regulatory proceedings. Credit is given to the staff for considering Barre Town's comments and for CVRPC's assistance to Barre Town over the years. The Town continues to have concerns about the State usurping local control.

Staff has addressed comments very well, but there is still concern about the use of the term "Big Box" and not having a definition. What makes Big Box "big"? Are we really talking about regional impacts from a project rather than impacts from just a big box type development? The issue is really regional impacts of development; not necessarily "big box," per say. The CVRPC Project Review Procedures and Guidelines say that 20,000 sq ft is cause to review a project rather than it will have impacts. "Big Box" should not be the only development that needs to do an economic or community impact study. (This comment relates to the top of page 7 of the comment and response document.) We will get back to this comment during the deliberative discussion.

Further comments on the Land Use element and future land use map were as follows:

- page 2-27: The use of "roadside" without any definition seems inappropriate and perhaps unnecessary as part of the description.
- page 2-31: policy 4: CVRPC only reviews projects that have regionally significant impacts. The policies of the Project Review Committee are being amended to allow comments whether the project is regionally significant or not. In a town without zoning, the Regional Plan conformance becomes de facto zoning for that town.
- p.2-31 Policy 7: concern regarding limiting the number and size and proliferation of "small service businesses, small professional offices, and inns."
- 2-33 Policy 2: What's the definition of "critical" resource versus non-critical?
- 2-39 What's the difference between "discouraged" and "not encourage"? (pp 2-45 and 46.) Is "discourage" stronger? It would be good to keep in mind "prohibiting" versus "discouraging"; prohibit is regulatory.
- 2-14: Newer data should be used.
- The data should support the intention of the Regional Plan to maintain development patterns while protecting resources. The policies are guidance and not regulatory.
- Future Land Use Map: Would like to see the resources more clearly identified in the resource areas on the map.

*There being no further comments, the comment period was closed at 8:33 p.m. and the deliberative discussion commenced.*

The term "smart growth" is not used much in the 2008 Regional Plan even though the policies of smart growth are described. It was responded that not using the term "smart growth" gives an opportunity to focus more fully on the policies.

Discussion commenced on the *Comment and Response Document* which was developed as a result of the comments made at the May 12 hearing on the amendments to the 2008 Regional Plan and comments received in writing.

*Land Use Map*: add more narrative on the resource areas. The text identifies the source of the data on the resource areas. It's difficult to identify each resource on the map for each specific area mapped. People are encouraged to visit the site and the Agency of Natural Resources Atlas where you can hone in more specifically on a site to see the detail. The scale of the map doesn't allow for more details. It was suggested that the link to the Agency of Natural Resources online Atlas be added to the Plan in the Land Use element where the map is discussed.

Also add a statement about the accuracy of the boundaries due to the scale of the map. Boundaries need to be verified in the field and are only as accurate as the scale allows.

Mixed Use Commercial, page 5 of the comments: remove the use of "roadside."

Page 6: Re-energizing Commercial Areas call-out box is an excerpt from the Berlin Town Plan used to highlight some of the ideas contained in mixed uses.

In the last bullet of the call-out box, a comment was made on narrowing curb cuts and that curb cuts should not be narrowed. The response was made that this is an excerpt from a local plan to illustrate things that can be considered to encourage infill. It's not a Regional Plan policy, but conveys some of the possible concepts.

Page 7, # 2 "Big Box" wording change: eliminate the use of the term "Big Box" and use something like "large establishments" that might trigger the need for an economic and community impact study. Act 250 could require the study; the RPC could recommend it be done as a comment on a project.

It was also suggested that the threshold could be defined by the impacts that would need to be mitigated. If a study is done and it proves that there are no net benefits, could the permit then be denied?

In conclusion, it was agreed that the Regional Plan Draft Review Committee will review the amended language as developed by staff from the hearing comments. The discussion of the proposed amendments will conclude at the July Commission meeting in preparation for a final hearing and adoption in August or September. Plan elements being proposed for amendment will be provided to Commissioners with tracked changes for final consideration.

Chairmanship: Don La Haye was thanked for his work as chair and his diligence on behalf of CVRPC.

Next CVRPC Meeting: The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 14, 2015.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Emery