

CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Draft MINUTES

September 8, 2020

Commissioners:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Barre City	Janet Shatney	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Moretown	Dara Torre, Secretary/Treasurer
<input type="checkbox"/>		Heather Grandfield, Alt.	<input type="checkbox"/>		Joyce Manchester, Alt
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Barre Town	Byron Atwood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Northfield	Laura Hill-Eubanks, Chair
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		George Clain, Alt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Orange	Lee Cattaneo
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Berlin	Robert Wernecke	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plainfield	
<input type="checkbox"/>		Karla Nuissl, Alt.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Paula Emery, Alt.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cabot	Amy Hornblas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Roxbury	Jerry D'Amico
<input type="checkbox"/>	Calais	John Brabant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Waitsfield	Don La Haye
<input type="checkbox"/>		Jan Ohlsson, Alt.	<input type="checkbox"/>		Harrison Snapp, Alt.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Duxbury	Alan Quackenbush	<input type="checkbox"/>	Warren	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	E. Montpelier	Julie Potter	<input type="checkbox"/>		J. Michael Bridgewater, Alt.
<input type="checkbox"/>		Clarice Cutler, Alt.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Washington	Peter Carbee
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fayston		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Waterbury	Steve Lotspeich, Vice-Chair
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Marshfield	Robin Schunk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Williamstown	Richard Turner
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Middlesex	Ron Krauth	<input type="checkbox"/>		Jacqueline Higgins, Alt.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Montpelier	Marcella Dent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Woodbury	Michael Gray
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Mike Miller, Alt.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Worcester	Bill Arrand

Staff: Bonnie Waninger, Nancy Chartrand, Clare Rock, Zachary Maia

Guests: Cedric Sanborn, Barre Town Planning Commission; Chris Violette, Barre Town Planning Director;
Mike Gilbar, Barre Town Planning Commission

Call to Order

Chair L. Hill-Eubanks called the remote meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Quorum was present to conduct business.

Adjustments to the Agenda

George Clain recused himself from action for duration of the meeting.

Public Comments

None.

Regional Plan Amendment

Hill-Eubanks directed the Board to the information in the packet and introduced C. Rock of CVRPC who gave an overview of this agenda item. She noted this amendment was discussed previously with the Board before the COVID-19 Stay Home Stay Safe Order. Hearings have now been scheduled with the first one happening this evening. She advised Mike Miller of Montpelier will be providing a presentation regarding Montpelier's Growth Center and that she will provide a presentation on the boundary

1 revisions proposed for the Regional Plan.

3 **City of Montpelier Growth Center Designation Planning Process**

4 Waninger reminded the Board that when this topic was discussed previously they requested to have
5 Mike Miller provide additional information regarding Montpelier's Growth Center the history of the
6 expansion.

7
8 Hill-Eubanks welcomed Miller, Director of Planning for City of Montpelier, and Alternate Commissioner
9 to the Board for Montpelier. Miller provided a presentation which outlined the history of Montpelier's
10 growth center and the growth center boundary changes. He advised that the State Growth Center
11 Program is to designate an area where 50% of housing and commercial development will be targeted
12 with utilities and services to support that growth with assistance from grants and state funding.
13 Montpelier's initial growth center was approved in 2009, and then there was a reduction of that growth
14 center initiated in 2014 with conditions placed by Downtown Board. In 2019 during the 5-year renewal
15 there was an adjustment to add the Crestview area which generated the discussion of potential bear
16 habitat during the last Board discussion. Crestview was added to support the City's goal to encourage
17 housing, which was a challenge within the previous boundaries. Both Sabin's Pasture and Crestview are
18 undeveloped areas within walking distance to the designated downtown to provide areas for additional
19 housing growth. He advised that Montpelier's growth center program is successful in meeting the goal
20 of 50%+ of all new dwellings and enterprises being within the growth center.

21
22 Rock asked Miller to talk specifically about the benefits to having a growth center boundary and what it
23 will do to help achieve the goals for the area. Miller advised one benefit is it forces the City to keep
24 development within the boundaries and to stay focused on an area of land that will support their
25 designated downtown. Another benefit is if project comes up that needs utilities and services, they get
26 the benefit of being able to apply for TIF (Tax Increment Finance), and they also try to tie to ability to get
27 tax stabilization. They also try to set up programs and zoning to work hand-in-hand with the growth
28 center boundaries. He noted there is some regulatory relief available, but they have not had projects
29 take advantage of it. He confirmed that Sabin's Pasture is currently not developed. He also spoke
30 about Crestview and its future development potential and what habitat issues there might be. He noted
31 that Crestview had roads roughed in approximately 15 years ago, but has not been developed to date.
32 The parcel runs up against the Middlesex boundary and that is the primary area for the bear habitat, so
33 while there may be some habitat that extends into Crestview in Montpelier, he doesn't have details on
34 that. If any projects get planned for that parcel, they would likely have to go through Act 250, however,
35 there are no plans at this time.

37 **Public Hearing**

38
39 Rock asked Board to formally take action to open the hearing.

40
41 *D. LaHaye made a motion to open the hearing for the amendments to the 2016 Regional Plan, 2020*
42 *draft amendment; seconded by J. Potter. Motion carried and hearing is open.*

43
44 Rock provided a quick summary of the amendments which propose to remove the regional housing
45 distribution plan and to extend the regional boundaries around Montpelier as depicted on the future

1 land use map.

2
3 Rock advised the Regional Plan Committee (RPC) recommends removing the housing distribution plan as
4 it is no longer relevant or applicable, and municipalities will no longer be required to meet this
5 requirement.

6
7 Additionally proposed are changes to the future land use map as it was recognized that the regional
8 planning area around Montpelier doesn't align with the local state designated growth area. She
9 provided detailed maps outlining current boundaries and proposed boundaries. She advised this change
10 was not requested by the City of Montpelier, but rather resulted by review by RPC which identified that
11 the Regional Plan states Regional Centers are the places that contain Growth Centers, it was determined
12 the Regional Center boundaries should be aligned with the state approved Growth Center.

13
14 It was confirmed that tonight is the first public hearing related to the proposed amendments and the
15 second public hearing is scheduled for October 13th.

16
17 Hill-Eubanks opened the hearing to comments. A general comment was raised about pushing growth
18 centers as state and regional policy while concurrently expanding high speed internet which will aid
19 moving development in rural and undeveloped areas appears to be counterproductive.

20
21 Miller commented that the proposed map did not include a section of Northfield Street which is in
22 Montpelier's growth center area and suggested it should be included. It was confirmed this area is
23 zoned the same as Route 12N as it starts to leave Montpelier.

24
25 Hill-Eubanks asked for a motion to close the public hearing.

26
27 *S. Lotspeich made a motion to close the public hearing on the Regional Plan Amendment, seconded by B.*
28 *Arrand. Motion carried and hearing was closed.*

29
30 Hill-Eubanks asked for motion to hold a second public hearing on October 13th at 7:50 pm during the
31 regular Board meeting.

32
33 *D. LaHaye moved to set the second hearing date for October 13th at 7:50; seconded by A. Quackenbush.*
34 *Motion carried.*

35
36 Waninger asked for clarification as to whether the Board would like staff to adjust the map to fully
37 incorporate the boundary identified by Miller during the comment period.

38
39 *D. Torre made a motion to adjust the map as discussed. R. Wernecke seconded. Motion carried.*

40
41 Wernecke inquired if roll call votes were necessary. Hill-Eubanks advised it was her understanding that it
42 was not necessary if a vote is unanimous. Waninger also advised she did not believe it was necessary.
43 Miller further advised that if a vote is unanimous it does not need to be a roll call, however, if there is
44 one "no" vote, a roll call is necessary.

1 **Municipal Plan Approval, Confirmation of Planning Process & Certificate of Energy**
2 **Compliance**

3 Hill-Eubanks directed the Board to the information in the packet and introduced B. Arrand to provide
4 further details.
5

6 Arrand advised the Barre Town Municipal Plan was originally discussed at the Municipal Plan Review
7 Committee (MPRC) meeting and public hearing on August 27th and that hearing was continued to meet
8 on September 8th, before tonight's Board meeting. On the 27th the plan and planning process was
9 voted to be approved. However, an issuance of determination of energy compliance was not agreed to
10 at that meeting due to a missing map, resulting in the continuance and a request that Barre Town
11 provide the missing map.
12

13 Z. Maia confirmed the MPRC recommended that the Town of Barre Municipal Plan be approved and the
14 town planning process be approved; and at issue was the certificate of energy compliance. He advised
15 the standards outline a set of maps that must be received for a Municipal Plan to receive an energy
16 compliance determination. He advised the Plan met all criteria with the exception of the Existing
17 Generation Map.
18

19 Maia advised that at today's meeting, Barre Town provided a letter of clarification and a robust
20 discussion ensued regarding the standard used to determine compliance. Maia confirmed the standard
21 has three options: yes, the map was included; no, the map was not included; or the map is not
22 applicable to the Town's Plan. In order to select not applicable, the town would have to provide a
23 compelling reason to advise why the map is not applicable. Barre Town provided the following in their
24 letter:
25

26 "The Barre Town Planning Commission and the Barre Town Selectboard respectfully request that a
27 determination is made that the existing renewable energy generation map omitted from the Barre Town
28 Energy Plan is not applicable. It is not applicable for the following compelling reasons:

- 29 1. The map is not relevant considering that there is always more up to date and accurate data
30 available on the Community Energy Dashboard. Within a few clicks, a Planner, Developer, or
31 Regulator can see current data, not data on a map that could be up to 8 years old.
- 32 2. Unlike all other maps, the electric generation map does not set policy or have any regulatory
33 implication at all. The map is a snapshot in time and outdated almost as soon as it is printed.
- 34 3. From a historical standpoint, the standards do not require a map to be included to show
35 historical data.
- 36 4. If there is a concern for precedent, the precedent would only be for the existing renewable
37 energy generation map, and then only if the same case is made which may very well happen. It
38 will not set precedent for any other part of the plan or any other maps."

39 The MPRC heard the above stated reasons and after additional discussion, voted to recommend the
40 Board of Commissioners provide the affirmative determination of energy compliance to the plan.
41

1 Hill-Eubanks recapped that the Municipal Plan is recommended as being approved, the planning process
2 is recommended as being approved, and the energy compliance determination is recommended as
3 being approved; and the Board now needs to decide whether or not to move these recommendations.
4 Discussion ensued regarding whether or not each item should be voted on individually. It was
5 confirmed they are separate issues and separate votes. Hill-Eubanks noted the resolution on page 14 of
6 the packet addresses the plan and the process, but does not address energy compliance and that voting
7 on energy compliance would come after voting on the approval of the plan and the planning process.
8 Waninger advised it is necessary for the plan to be approved prior to issuing a Certificate of Energy
9 Compliance.

10
11 Hill-Eubanks read the full resolution on page 14 to the meeting participants and opened to discussion.

12
13 *B. Arrand moved that the Commission approve the Town of Barre, Vermont 2020 Town Plan; M. Gray*
14 *seconded. Motion carried.*

15
16 *B. Arrand moved the Commission also approve the Town of Barre planning process; seconded by D.*
17 *LaHaye. Motion carried.*

18
19 *J. Potter moved to authorize the Board Chair to sign the resolution related to these items; seconded by B.*
20 *Arrand. Motion carried.*

21
22 Hill-Eubanks congratulated Barre Town on approval of their Town Plan. She then directed the Board to
23 the resolution related to Determination of Energy Compliance on page 15, opened discussion and
24 provided a recap that the plan was missing a map. B. Arrand advised the question at this point is does
25 the Commission feel that the reasons provided by Barre Town for not including the map are compelling
26 enough to determine it is not applicable.

27
28 A robust discussion ensued which included the following: a recap of the reasons provided by Barre
29 Town in their letter for not including the map. It was noted that Barre Town held three public hearings
30 with no attendees and that considerable time and effort was put into creating a good quality product for
31 the Commission's approval and the map was an oversight, it was not intentionally left out and that there
32 is current information (Dashboard) that will allow the public to get an actual depiction of current use
33 rather than a map in the Plan.

34
35 Clarification was requested from staff regarding the checklist for standards as to what should be in an
36 approved energy plan; were those standards developed by the Regional Planning Commission or by the
37 State Public Utilities Commission (PUC). Maia advised the standards were PUC standards.

38
39 Comment was also made regarding a presentation provided to the Board in 2019 regarding the
40 importance of energy storage. It was noted the Regional Plan does not include energy storage and the
41 Commission was encouraged to revise the Regional Plan as soon as possible so that municipal plans
42 would be required to include energy storage.

43
44 Chris Violette, Barre Town Planning Director, offered that the compelling reason they believe map is not
45 applicable is they don't believe most planners, developers or regulators will go to this somewhat

1 obscure and outdated map when they are looking at a project in Barre Town, they will go to the
2 Dashboard where they will get the most current information. He noted this map is not really that
3 significant while other maps in the plan are significant for very specific reasons. A determination of not
4 applicable will make this process whole. He also noted they appreciate the Plan Review Committee
5 spending time with them to address this issue.

6
7 Hill-Eubanks asked the Barre Town Planning Commission in consideration that this is a standard set by
8 the State do they see a problem with getting to the PUC and offering the Energy Plan as it stands
9 without the map and being vulnerable to a challenge due to not having the map. Violette advised they
10 had that discussion at the MPRC meeting and believe the not applicable choice will be sufficient at the
11 PUC and are comfortable. Also noted by C. Sanborn was their wanting approval to get significant
12 deference in case another energy project is proposed in the Town. Arrand advised a majority of the
13 MPRC felt it should be recommended to pass. Hill-Eubanks clarified that it is not up to Regional Planning
14 Commission to change the criteria, it is up to the State to change the criteria and she believes the map
15 should be a baseline to see progress over time. R. Krauth advised that he looked at the Dashboard
16 during the discussion and noted it includes graphs that show the progress over time so a baseline may
17 not be necessary and the map is a snapshot in time.

18
19 G. Clain, Barre Town Planning Commission, also spoke to the town's comfort level and noted they are
20 looking for Regional Planning Commission to be comfortable with its determination saying that the map
21 is not applicable in the standards and that the Dashboard is more relevant. Hill-Eubanks noted that she
22 felt the arguments were somewhat in conflict.

23
24 B. Atwood reminded the Board that not applicable is a choice provided by the State. Hill-Eubanks noted
25 that she felt not applicable might apply to having no projects in the town. Atwood stated the Town feels
26 that the map is not relevant and therefore not applicable per logic presented by the State's own
27 directive. R. Wernecke asked what the motion before the Board. Hill-Eubanks advised we currently do
28 not have a motion and directed the Board to the information on Page 15, which is what would be voted
29 on.

30
31 *R. Wernecke moved that the Town of Barre warrants an energy certificate of compliance; seconded by R.*
32 *Turner. D. Torre, and B. Arrand abstained. A roll call was initiated. Waninger took a tally of the roll call*
33 *and provided the results as 12 yeses and 5 abstentions. The vote passes.*

34
35 It was suggested there be a motion to have the chair sign the resolution, as it was with the previous
36 action items related to the Municipal Plan. It was also confirmed that the resolution did not need to be
37 read into the record.

38
39 *R. Wernecke made a motion to authorize the Board Chair to sign the Determination of Energy*
40 *Compliance resolution; seconded by R. Turner. Motion carried.*

41 42 **Municipal Plan Approvals**

43 Hill-Eubanks directed the Board to the information in the packet and advised a lot of plans are coming in
44 for approval and towns want plans approved before end of September so they can apply for Municipal
45 Planning Grants. She noted that normally it is Board that decides Town Plan approval and it is an

1 important function of the Board, therefore they would like to it to be completed by the Board. The
2 following options for action were identified: wait until October Board meeting which would mean
3 planning grants could not be applied for, direct Executive Committee to complete approval on behalf of
4 the Board, or hold a Special Commission meeting to act on the plans in September. It was also noted
5 that if the Board does choose to hold a special meeting they were looking at the week of September 21st
6 and suggest that the Board allows the Executive Committee to make the decision in the event a quorum
7 is not made at the special meeting.

8
9 There was question if the scheduling would give the towns time enough to apply for the Municipal
10 Grants. Waninger advised that if towns are aware we are scheduling a special board meeting; they will
11 start their applications in advance of that meeting.

12
13 *R. Wernecke moved September 24th for a Special Commission meeting and should there not be sufficient*
14 *members present that they authorize the Executive Committee to make the decision on behalf of the*
15 *Board. P. Carbee seconded. Clarification of a 6:30 pm start time was made. Waninger asked if a straw*
16 *poll should be conducted and Lotspeich asked if anyone could not make the date. A. Quackenbush*
17 *advised he could not. G. Clain asked if they were going to warn the meeting for the Commission, how*
18 *would they warn for Executive Committee if there wasn't a quorum. It was confirmed both meetings*
19 *would be warned consecutively. J. Potter commented the bylaws clearly allow special meetings and with*
20 *the pandemic the towns cutting it on the wire is not their fault, all towns have been interested in*
21 *applying for Municipal Planning Grants at one point or another and she encouraged the Board to show*
22 *up and make quorum. Waninger called attention to a chat comment that P. Emery is not available on*
23 *9/24. The vote was called and the motion carried.*

24 25 **Meeting Minutes**

26 Hill-Eubanks directed the Board to the information in the packet.

27
28 *R. Turner moved to approve the minutes of July 14th; R. Krauth seconded. Motion carried.*

29 30 **Reports**

31 Hill-Eubanks directed the Board to the information in the packet. Waninger apologized for the mix-up of
32 Board packet and emails due to utilization of an incorrect email list.

33 34 **Adjournment**

35 *D. LaHaye moved to adjourn at 8:23 pm; L. Catteneo seconded. Motion carried.*

36
37 Respectfully submitted,

38
39 Nancy Chartrand, Office Manager