

CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
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

C. Rock gave an overview. She noted this amendment was discussed previously with the Board before the COVID-19 Stay Home, Stay Safe Order. This is the first of two public hearings. She advised Mike Miller of Montpelier will be providing a presentation regarding Montpelier's Growth Center, and she will provide a presentation on the boundary revisions proposed for the Regional Plan.

1 City of Montpelier Growth Center Designation Planning Process

2 Waninger reminded the Board that when this topic was discussed previously the Board requested
3 additional information regarding Montpelier's Growth Center and recent boundary changes.
4

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

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

34 **Public Hearing**

35 *D. La Haye moved to open the public hearing for the amendments to the 2016 Regional Plan; J. Potter*
36 *seconded. Motion carried.* The hearing was opened.
37

38 Rock provided a summary of the amendments. They remove the regional housing distribution plan and
39 extend the regional center boundaries around Montpelier as depicted on the future land use map. Rock
40 said the Regional Plan Committee (RPC) recommends removing the housing distribution plan as it is no
41 longer relevant or applicable, and municipalities will no longer be required to meet this requirement.
42

43 Additionally proposed are changes to the future land use map as it was recognized that the regional
44 planning area around Montpelier doesn't align with the State-designated area. Rock provided detailed
45 maps outlining current boundaries and proposed boundaries. She advised this change was not

1 requested by the City of Montpelier, but rather was identified by the RPC. The Regional Plan states
2 Regional Centers are the places that contain Growth Centers, and the Regional Center boundary should
3 be aligned with the State-designated Growth Center boundary.

4
5 It was confirmed that tonight is the first public hearing related to the proposed amendments. The
6 second public hearing is scheduled for October 13th.

7
8 Hill-Eubanks invited comments. A general comment was raised about pushing growth centers as state
9 and regional policy while concurrently expanding high speed internet which will aid moving
10 development in rural and undeveloped areas appears to be counterproductive.

11
12 Miller commented that the proposed map did not include a section of Northfield Street which is in
13 Montpelier's growth center area and suggested it should be included. It was confirmed this area is
14 zoned the same as Route 12N as it starts to leave Montpelier.

15
16 *S. Lotspeich moved to close the public hearing on the Regional Plan Amendment; B. Arrand seconded.*
17 *Motion carried.* The hearing was closed.

18
19 *D. La Haye moved to set the second hearing date for October 13th at 7:50; A. Quackenbush seconded.*
20 *Motion carried.*

21
22 Waninger asked for clarification as to whether the Board would like staff to adjust the map to fully
23 incorporate the boundary identified by Miller during the comment period.

24
25 *D. Torre moved to adjust the map as discussed; R. Wernecke seconded. Motion carried.*

26
27 Wernecke inquired if roll call votes were necessary. Hill-Eubanks advised it was her understanding that it
28 was not necessary if a vote is unanimous. Waninger also advised she did not believe it was necessary.
29 Miller further advised that if a vote is unanimous it does not need to be a roll call; however, if there is
30 one "no" vote, a roll call is necessary.

31
32 **Municipal Plan Approval, Confirmation of Planning Process & Certificate of Energy**
33 **Compliance**

34 B. Arrand said the Barre Town Municipal Plan originally was discussed at the Municipal Plan Review
35 Committee (MPRC) meeting and public hearing on August 27th and that hearing was continued to
36 September 8th before tonight's Board meeting. On the 27th, the MPRC voted to recommend approval
37 and confirmation. Issuance of a determination of energy compliance was not agreed to at that meeting
38 due to a missing map, resulting in the continuance and a request that Barre Town provide the missing
39 map.

40
41 Z. Maia advised the energy planning standards include having a set of maps that must be received for a
42 Municipal Plan to receive an energy compliance determination. He advised the Plan met all criteria with
43 the exception of the Existing Generation Map.

1 Maia advised that at today's MPRC meeting, Barre Town provided a letter of clarification and a robust
2 discussion ensued regarding the standard used to determine compliance. Maia stated the standard has
3 three options: yes, the map was included; no, the map was not included; or the map is not applicable to
4 the Town's Plan. To select not applicable, the Town must provide a compelling reason to advise why the
5 map is not applicable. Barre Town provided the following in its letter:

6
7 "The Barre Town Planning Commission and the Barre Town Selectboard respectfully request
8 that a determination is made that the existing renewable energy generation map omitted from
9 the Barre Town Energy Plan is not applicable. It is not applicable for the following compelling
10 reasons:

11 1. The map is not relevant considering that there is always more up to date and accurate
12 data available on the Community Energy Dashboard. Within a few clicks, a Planner,
13 Developer, or Regulator can see current data, not data on a map that could be up to 8
14 years old.

15 2. Unlike all other maps, the electric generation map does not set policy or have any
16 regulatory implication at all. The map is a snapshot in time and outdated almost as soon
17 as it is printed.

18 3. From a historical standpoint, the standards do not require a map to be included to
19 show historical data.

20 4. If there is a concern for precedent, the precedent would only be for the existing
21 renewable energy generation map, and then only if the same case is made which may
22 very well happen. It will not set precedent for any other part of the plan or any other
23 maps."

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

26
27 Hill-Eubanks recapped that the Municipal Plan is recommended as being approved, the planning process
28 is recommended as being approved, and the energy compliance determination is recommended as
29 being approved; and the Board now needs to decide whether to move these recommendations.
30 Discussion ensued regarding whether each item should be voted individually. It was confirmed they are
31 separate issues and separate votes. Hill-Eubanks noted the resolution on page 14 of the packet
32 addresses the plan and the process, but does not address energy compliance and that voting on energy
33 compliance would come after voting on the approval of the plan and the planning process. Waninger
34 advised it is necessary for the plan to be approved prior to issuing a Certificate of Energy Compliance.

35
36 Hill-Eubanks read the full resolution on page 14 to the meeting participants.

37
38 *B. Arrand moved that the Commission approve the Town of Barre, Vermont 2020 Town Plan; M. Gray*
39 *seconded. Motion carried.*

40
41 *B. Arrand moved the Commission also confirm the Town of Barre planning process; D. La Haye seconded.*

1 *Motion carried.*

2
3 *J. Potter moved to authorize the Board Chair to sign the resolution related to these items; B. Arrand*
4 *seconded. Motion carried.*

5
6 Hill-Eubanks congratulated Barre Town on approval of its Town Plan. She directed the Board to the
7 resolution related to Determination of Energy Compliance on page 15, opened discussion, and provided
8 a recap that the plan was missing a map. B. Arrand advised the question at this point is does the
9 Commission feel that the reasons provided by Barre Town for not including the map are compelling
10 enough to determine it is not applicable.

11
12 A robust discussion ensued which included the following: a recap of the reasons provided by Barre
13 Town in their letter for not including the map. It was noted that Barre Town held three public hearings
14 with no attendees and that considerable time and effort was put into creating a good quality product for
15 the Commission's approval and the map was an oversight, it was not intentionally left out and that there
16 is current information (Dashboard) that will allow the public to get an actual depiction of current use
17 rather than a map in the Plan.

18
19 Clarification was requested from staff regarding the checklist for standards as to what should be in an
20 approved energy plan; were those standards developed by the Regional Planning Commission or by the
21 Public Service Department (PSD). Maia advised the standards were PSD standards.

22
23 Comment was also made regarding a presentation provided to the Board in 2019 regarding the
24 importance of energy storage. It was noted the Regional Plan does not include energy storage and the
25 Commission was encouraged to revise the Regional Plan as soon as possible so that municipal plans
26 would be required to include energy storage.

27
28 Chris Violette, Barre Town Planning Director, offered that the compelling reason they believe map is not
29 applicable is they don't believe most planners, developers or regulators will go to this somewhat
30 obscure and outdated map when they are looking at a project in Barre Town, they will go to the
31 Dashboard where they will get the most current information. He noted this map is not really that
32 significant while other maps in the plan are significant for very specific reasons. A determination of not
33 applicable will make this process whole. He also noted they appreciate the Plan Review Committee
34 spending time with them to address this issue.

35
36 Hill-Eubanks asked the Barre Town Planning Commission in consideration that this is a standard set by
37 the State do they see a problem with getting to the PUC and offering the Energy Plan as it stands
38 without the map and being vulnerable to a challenge due to not having the map. Violette advised they
39 had that discussion at the MPRC meeting and believe the not applicable choice will be sufficient at the
40 PUC and are comfortable. Also noted by C. Sanborn was their wanting approval to get substantial
41 deference in case another energy project is proposed in the Town. Arrand advised a majority of the
42 MPRC felt it should be recommended to pass. Hill-Eubanks clarified that it is not up to Regional Planning
43 Commission to change the criteria, it is up to the State to change the criteria and she believes the map
44 should be a baseline to see progress over time. R. Krauth advised that he looked at the Dashboard
45 during the discussion and noted it includes graphs that show the progress over time so a baseline may

1 not be necessary and the map is a snapshot in time.

2
3 G. Clain, Barre Town Planning Commission, also spoke to the Town's comfort level and noted they are
4 looking for Regional Planning Commission to be comfortable with its determination saying that the map
5 is not applicable in the standards and that the Dashboard is more relevant. Hill-Eubanks noted that she
6 felt the arguments were somewhat in conflict.

7
8 B. Atwood reminded the Board that not applicable is a choice provided by the State. Hill-Eubanks noted
9 that she felt not applicable might apply to having no projects in the Town. Atwood stated the Town
10 feels that the map is not relevant and therefore not applicable per logic presented by the State's own
11 directive. R. Wernecke asked what the motion before the Board. Hill-Eubanks advised no motion had
12 been made and directed the Board to the information on Page 15, which is what would be voted on.

13
14 *R. Wernecke moved that the Town of Barre warrants an energy certificate of compliance; R. Turner*
15 *seconded. D. Torre and B. Arrand abstained. A roll call was initiated. Waninger tallied the roll call and*
16 *provided the results as 12 yeas and 5 abstentions. Motion carried.*

17
18 It was suggested there be a motion to have the Chair sign the resolution, as it was with the previous
19 action items related to the Municipal Plan. It was also confirmed that the resolution did not need to be
20 read into the record.

21
22 *R. Wernecke moved to authorize the Board Chair to sign the Determination of Energy Compliance*
23 *resolution; R. Turner seconded. Motion carried.*

24 25 **Municipal Plan Approvals**

26 Hill-Eubanks a lot of plans are coming in for approval and towns want plans approved before end of
27 September so they can apply for Municipal Planning Grants. She noted that normally it is Board that
28 decides Plan approval and it is an important function of the Board, therefore they would like to it to be
29 completed by the Board. The following options for action were identified: wait until October Board
30 meeting which would mean planning grants could not be applied for, direct Executive Committee to
31 complete approval on behalf of the Board, or hold a Special Commission meeting to act on the plans in
32 September. It was also noted that if the Board does choose to hold a special meeting they were looking
33 at the week of September 21st and suggest that the Board allows the Executive Committee to make the
34 decision in the event a quorum is not made at the special meeting.

35
36 There was question if the scheduling would give the towns time enough to apply for the Municipal
37 Grants. Waninger advised that if towns are aware we are scheduling a special board meeting, they will
38 start their applications in advance of that meeting.

39
40 *R. Wernecke moved September 24th for a Special Commission meeting and should there not be sufficient*
41 *members present that the Executive Committee be authorized to make the decision on behalf of the*
42 *Board; P. Carbee seconded. Clarification of a 6:30 pm start time was made. Waninger asked if a straw*
43 *poll should be conducted, and Lotspeich asked if anyone could not make the date. A. Quackenbush*
44 *advised he could not. G. Clain asked if they were going to warn the meeting for the Commission, how*
45 *would they warn for Executive Committee if there wasn't a quorum. It was confirmed both meetings*

1 would be warned concurrently. J. Potter commented the bylaws clearly allow special meetings and with
2 the pandemic the towns cutting it on the wire is not their fault, all towns have been interested in
3 applying for Municipal Planning Grants at one point or another and she encouraged the Board to show
4 up and make quorum. Waninger called attention to a chat comment that P. Emery is not available on
5 9/24. The vote was called and the motion carried.

6 7 **Meeting Minutes**

8 R. Turner moved to approve the minutes of July 14th; R. Krauth seconded. Motion carried.
9

10 **Reports**

11 Waninger apologized for the mix-up of Board packet and emails due to utilization of an incorrect email
12 list.
13

14 **Adjournment**

15 D. La Haye moved to adjourn at 8:23 pm; L. Catteneo seconded. Motion carried.
16

17 Respectfully submitted,
18

19 Nancy Chartrand, Office Manager