

**CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Regional Plan Committee**

**Draft**

**February 11, 2021**

**5:00 – 6:00 pm**

Via GoToMeeting, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission  
29 Main Street, Suite 4, Montpelier, VT 05602

**Committee Members:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dara Torre, Chair
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Julie Potter, Vice Chair
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Laura Hill-Eubanks
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ron Krauth
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Marcella Dent

Staff: Clare Rock, Bonnie Waninger

**Welcome and Adjustments to the Agenda**

D Torre opened the meeting at 5:03pm. The Committee agreed to approve the minutes first.

**Public Comments**

No public comments as no members of the public were present.

**Approval Minutes**

J Potter made a motion to approve the May 26, 2020 and February 2, 2021 both sets of minutes, seconded by L Hill-Eubanks. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Regional Review continued: Berlin New Town Center (NTC) Application**

Staff provided a summary of what happened at the last meeting, reference the contents of the meeting packet and outlined the draft letter for committee review and comment. Staff also reported that the Downtown Board would not be meeting on February 22 as expected, instead they will hear the Berlin application at the March 22 meeting.

Discussion followed about the letter, in general the committee indicated that the letter was good with respect to the topics included. The committee agreed that the Berlin proposal was generally in conformance with the regional plan and that the letter should indicate support of the project.

The Committee reviewed the Relevant Regional Plan Goals and Policies documents included in the packet and identified the following areas to highlight as demonstration of regional plan conformance and support. They are:

- Housing Related Goals and policies: line 247, line 254, policy 5 re housing in new town centers and policy 7, as proposed housing will be closest to jobs and services
- Support of the project concept: line 143, policy 3
- Economic development related policies: line 272 policy 3, line 285, line 288
- Recognize the town has already meet goal and policy on lines 221 and 6

- Energy related goals and policies on lines 184, 185, with a recognition that policy on line 187 is challenging for many communities.
- Focusing investment in new town center: line 185
- Land use Policy on line 40
- Keep the ones which are already listed in the plan, and make the shopping related aspect a non-policy or issue.

The committee then discussed areas of opportunities and suggested that as the area builds out there are further opportunities for increased conformance:

- Recognize they have tried to pull away from wetlands, but current constraints have, pushed buildings close to the wetlands. It would be beneficial to pull new development further away from wetlands to minimize impacts.
- Increased compactness of the mixed use area, and redevelopment of the mall parking lot, rather than development which is pushed to the edges of the parking lot, this would provide increased opportunity for the built form to align more closely with characteristics of a traditional downtown.
- If the current housing proposal no longer includes a childcare component then suggest that childcare is encouraged to be an integral element and use in the area. If childcare is still in the current proposal then reference childcare policy as an area of conformance.

Regarding designation program requirements, the committee agreed that this program should be accessible to smaller towns (compared to S. Burlington and Colchester) and include those policies which are highlighted in magenta (lines 108, 127, 187), reiterate the housing component is a critical need and the plan works toward housing goals and how the town has made the investment in the needed infrastructure which is also a critical component of new housing development. And include recognition that this is a town looking to fix sprawl, rather than building on undeveloped land. This should be recognized and Berlin commended for taking this on.

Staff added that once the town seeks NDA designation, the RPC would have the opportunity to review and comment upon that designation application also. The committee was asked by staff what they find notable about the project – the infill to fix the sprawl problem and the housing dedication on Fox Run project and capacity for more housing.

Regarding the signing off on the letter, the committee is representing the Board, and suggests Bonnie sign on behalf of the Board. And the letter is put in the Board packet for the March meeting. The committee would like to see the letter before its put in the packet and members should just respond to staff directly if they have comments and/or edits and staff will incorporate and finalize.

J Potter made a motion to provide support to the application, finds application to be substantially in conformance with the regional plan and notes that as it the NTC is implemented there are opportunities strengthening alignment with the Regional Plan's policies, and direct staff to finalize the letter of support in accordance with discussion, seconded by L Hill-Eubanks. All in favor. Motion carried.

## **Adjournment at 6:38pm**

L Hill-Eubanks made a motion to adjourn, seconded by J Potter. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Next meeting Date: TBD**