

**CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**Draft MINUTES**  
**March 12, 2024**

**Commissioners:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Barre City	Janet Shatney, Sec/Treas	<input type="checkbox"/> Moretown	David Stapleton
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Joyce Manchester, Alt
<input type="checkbox"/> Barre Town	Alice Farrell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Northfield	Royal DeLegge
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jeff Schulz, Alt
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Berlin	Robert Wernecke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Orange	Lee Cattaneo
<input type="checkbox"/>	Karla Nuissl, Alt.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plainfield	Paula Emery
<input type="checkbox"/> Cabot	Brittany Butler	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bob Atchinson, Alt.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Calais	John Brabant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Roxbury	Jerry D'Amico, Chair
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jan Ohlsson, Alt.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Waitsfield	Don La Haye
<input type="checkbox"/> Duxbury	Alan Quackenbush	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Alice Peal, Alt.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	David Wendt, Alt.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Warren	Alexis Leacock
<input type="checkbox"/> E. Montpelier	Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jenny Faillace, Alt.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Clarice Cutler, Alt.	<input type="checkbox"/> Washington	Peter Carbee, Vice Chair
<input type="checkbox"/> Fayston	Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Waterbury	Doug Greason
<input type="checkbox"/> Marshfield	Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Williamstown	Richard Turner
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Middlesex	Ron Krauth	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacqueline Higgins, Alt.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mitch Osiecki, Alt.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Woodbury	Michael Gray
<input type="checkbox"/> Montpelier	Ariane Kissam	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Worcester	Bill Arrand
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mike Miller, Alt.		

Staff: Christian Meyer, Nancy Chartrand, Brian Voigt, Niki Sabado, Will Pitkin, Sam Lash

Guests: Melissa Bounty, Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation;

**Call to Order:** Chair D'Amico called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm, a roll call was completed and quorum was present.

**Adjustments to the Agenda:** Christian Meyer requested we move the Enhanced Energy Plan update to just before the minutes.

**Public Comments:** None

**Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation:** Chair D'Amico introduced Melissa Bounty of CVEDC. She stated they are still primarily dealing with flood impact, which has been a major concern for businesses in the region. They are providing a variety of support to a variety of businesses through philanthropy and federal funding and doubled their staff size in response to the needs generated by the flood. They are running a grant program - Small Business Technical Assistance Exchange, which is the third round the RDCs of Vermont has supported. The initial two rounds were federally funded for COVID, now the State is funding the third round for nine special classes of historically disadvantaged people from demographics that were historically underserved.

1 They are primarily managing professional services going out to businesses (awards of ~4,000 for services of  
2 electricians, plumbers, marketing, photography, accounting, etc. – services to elevate a business’s ability to  
3 thrive). Legislatively, flood impact is a large concern and they are supporting a not yet introduced, but draft bill  
4 that contains the Flood Response Assistance Program being introduced by Rep Williams of Barre. They have  
5 calculated \$200M of physical damage suffered by businesses in Central Vermont and \$300M of economic impact  
6 from the July flood. She noted that 20% of flood impacted business owners are people of color, which is  
7 disproportionate to the population. This statistic has generated the interest of philanthropy and the band Phish  
8 has funded a program to support BIPOC, New American and Low-Income business owners impacted flood.

9  
10 She advised that the Regional Project Priority List that CVRPC and CVEDC typically work on mutually, has shifted  
11 a bit this year. Northern Borders Regional Commission Catalyst Program will be running two cycles this year  
12 instead of one, and have given us the option to decide if we want to do a 2<sup>nd</sup> round of project prioritization. It is  
13 up the two organizations to determine if they have the band width to run the 2<sup>nd</sup> round and CVEDC is not feeling  
14 strongly they have the band width to do so. This process would have to be completed much quicker than the  
15 process we usually run in the fall. She asked CVRPC to let her know how he would like to discuss that further in  
16 the near future.

17  
18 **Winooski Basin Tactical Basin Plan Conformance:** Brian Voigt, Senior Natural Resources Planner provided an  
19 outline of the information provided in the meeting packet. In December 2023 the Board voted to table the  
20 conformance determination of the Winooski Basin Tactical Basin Plan until it had been finalized and feedback on  
21 comments received during comment period had been provided. The information in the packet outlines a  
22 request for an authorization for the Executive Director to sign the conformance letter. It was noted that  
23 previous comment was offered that the Plan lacked strong enough language about PFAs and that was important  
24 to the region. John Brabant stated he reviewed the comments and advised there is acknowledgment in the plan  
25 and it allows some level of redress for our comments related to PFAs and the responsive summary was pretty  
26 thorough. It was also confirmed it was a final draft that we would be approving.

27  
28 *John Brabant moved to approve the finding of conformance between the 2024 Winooski River Watershed*  
29 *Tactical Basin Plan and the 2020 Central Vermont Regional Plan, and authorize the Executive Director to sign a*  
30 *letter confirming the conformance finding to be sent to the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental*  
31 *Conservation. Robert Wernecke seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

32  
33 Brian thanked the Board for investing the time in reviewing this document a second time. Brian also noted the  
34 organization is working on their Tactical Basin Plan work program for next year and if there are areas where  
35 folks want to invest time, please reach out to Brian.

36  
37 **Regional Plan Update:** Christian Meyer provided a summary of where we are currently in this process and  
38 recommended a change of course. He noted the organization has been working on a Regional Plan update since  
39 2022, however, we are six months behind where we wanted to be at this point in the process. We brought the  
40 first semi-final draft chapters to the Regional Plan Committee for review last week, and it was determined the  
41 process should not be rushed to approve and adopt a new plan. Christian has spoken with other regional  
42 commissions as well as the Department of Housing and Community Development regarding extensions to  
43 complete a Regional Plan update process. Two commissions advised that in the last two years they had to do a  
44 plan re-adoption in order to allow more time to update a new plan.

1  
2 Re-adoption would involve staff drafting a comprehensive plan assessment report to be reviewed with Regional  
3 Plan Committee this month. However, presenting our existing plan for re-adoption and then giving ourselves  
4 time to fully work through the public engagement process on the new plan appears to make the most sense.  
5

6 In April we would present the assessment report to the Board. The report would be released to the public  
7 following the next Board meeting with a republishing of 2016 plan. We would plan to have our 1<sup>st</sup> hearing in  
8 May and 2<sup>nd</sup> hearing in June for the re-adoption and this would allow us to maintain an active plan.  
9

10 It was noted that while the consequences of a lapsed plan appear minor to the region – i.e. no financial  
11 consequences in terms of contracts or legal penalties; it is believed the municipalities may suffer as the region  
12 has to have an active plan to approve a municipal plan, therefore all town designations, preferred siting for  
13 solar, enhanced energy plans and town plans would all be delayed during a lapse.  
14

15 Alice Peal as Chair of the Regional Plan Committee advised she had talked at length about this with Christian and  
16 concurred that not rushing the process would be beneficial to the organization and allow more engagement.  
17 She also noted there are a number of initiatives that will be coming down from the State that should be in our  
18 new regional plan and the strategy Christian has outlined would allow us to include such initiatives. She also  
19 noted that the work on the assessment to re-adopt the existing plan is a good exercise for the staff and the  
20 Regional Plan Committee to go through.  
21

22 Doug Greason agreed with Alice noting that there is a housing needs assessment in the works that should be  
23 available for creating housing section, and any changes of Act 250 should be included in a new plan.  
24

25 It was confirmed we will not be taking formal action on the recommendation; however, a straw poll showed the  
26 organization is in favor of moving in the direction of a re-adoption to allow more time to complete a new plan.  
27 Christian noted that a timeline is key and suggested giving ourselves 12 months so we will have a new plan in  
28 place by March 2025.  
29

30 **Legislative Update:** Christian Meyer initiated discussion on H.687 (Draft 6.1) as outlined in the meeting packet,  
31 noting it appears to have impacts on regional planning and how we do our work and our place between  
32 municipalities and the State. It assigns additional authority to Regional Planning Commissions and the Future  
33 Land Use map and Regional Plan on how Act 250 is executed and its jurisdiction; and in exchange for that  
34 additional authority future Regional Plans and land use maps would have to receive approval from Department  
35 of Housing and Community Development, rather than our municipalities having the authority for such approvals.  
36

37 Significant discussion ensued sharing concerns related to enforcement becoming the responsibility of the  
38 municipalities vs. the state, and potential legal fees for municipalities. It was also noted the bill would impact  
39 designations which are currently applied for through Department of Housing and Community Development,  
40 however, the bill outlines that application would go to the RPC to include on their land use map.  
41

42 There was concern about municipal capacity to manage Act 250 decisions and if this requires a municipality  
43 creating a new board or committee. Also discussed were the different Tiers and their potential implications.

1 It was noted that as currently drafted Tiers would not be applied to any municipalities that did not want the  
2 responsibility and that Tier 1a and Tier 1b would likely not impact a large number of Central Vermont  
3 municipalities. Also noted was the change in language in Tier 3 and how it might be applied after the rule  
4 making process.

5  
6 There was also discussion on what a municipality already may be doing and what would trigger Act 250 review  
7 that a municipality would not be involved with already. Also noted was that some municipal zoning may  
8 currently be reliant upon Act 250 review for large housing projects, and the ability to participate through that  
9 process rather than having to review and approve it themselves. Concern was shared on how a municipality  
10 would review such items as traffic and services that need to be provided for growth.

11  
12 **Enhanced Energy Plans Update:** Climate & Energy Planner Sam Lash provided an overview of the information  
13 included in the meeting packet. CVRPC is finishing drafting the Enhanced Energy Plan as part of the Regional  
14 Plan update and over the next month or two we will be providing municipal break outs of the data and analyses  
15 for Enhanced Energy Plans for municipalities. If a municipality is doing a Town Plan update or want to do an  
16 updated Enhanced Energy Plan, CVRPC has the data you need and will be offering workshops to assist with the  
17 planning process for towns to create and update Enhanced Energy Plans. She reiterated that this is optional,  
18 you don't have to work with the RPC, but we want to be sure towns know that this data and assistance is  
19 available.

20  
21 Brief discussion ensued related to solar and collection of generation data as well as the impacts of snow and ice.

22  
23 **Minutes – (1/9/24):** *Lee Cattaneo moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Michael Gray. Motion passed*  
24 *unanimously.*

25  
26 **Reports:** Christian reiterated that we are fully staffed with 10 employees. Will Pitkin spoke briefly about Act  
27 250. Also discussed was who had the authority over inventorying and inspecting, specifically small earthen  
28 dams. Alice Peal shared a link for the State [https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/dam-safety/inspection-](https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/dam-safety/inspection-program)  
29 [program](https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/dam-safety/inspection-program).

30  
31 *Bill Arrand moved to accept the staff and committee reports, seconded by Ron Krauth. Motion passed*  
32 *unanimously.*

33  
34 **Adjournment:** *Don La Haye moved to adjourn at 8:13 pm; seconded by Lee Cattaneo. Motion carried.*

35  
36 Respectfully submitted,  
37 Nancy Chartrand, Office Manager  
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