Full Commission Meeting
February 27, 2018
Newbrook Fire Department


Commissioners Participating via Conference Call: Jack Cunningham, Stephen Dotson, Renee Mulkey

Guests via Conference Call: Jim Franzinelli (Readsboro)

Citizen Interest Commissioners Present: Greg Brown, Wendy Harrison

Staff Present: Chris Campany

Introductions: There was a quorum of 15 towns present.

Convened: 6:03PM

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jodi French at approximately 6:03 p.m. Those present were asked to introduce themselves. Jodi thanked Newbrook Fire Department for use of the facility.

New Agenda Item: Eric Stevens asked that WRC compliance with Vermont Open Meeting Law be added to the agenda. He explained that the WRC did not post draft minutes to the website within 5 days as is required by law. He also said there had been some issues with agendas. John Whitman expressed agreement with Eric’s concerns, and had felt that the WRC typically did things by the book. Jodi explained that when the Open Meeting Law established the posting requirement the Executive Board had reservations about posting unapproved minutes to the website. On a motion by Eric, seconded by John, there was a unanimous roll call vote in favor of the Windham Regional Commission abiding by Vermont Open Meeting Law.

At some point during the discussion of the above agenda item, Jack Cunningham left the call.

Administrative Items & Reports:

Secretary’s Report: On a motion by Tim Arsenault, seconded by Gabby Ciuffreda, the minutes of the January 30th Full Commission meeting were approved by a roll call vote.

Financial Report: On a motion by Tim Arsenault, seconded by Charlie Goodwin, the Treasurer’s Report was approved by a roll call vote. Executive Director Chris Campany noted that operations continue to be on budget and that the audit had been completed and will be reviewed by the Executive Board at its March meeting.
Consideration of Moving the Draft Windham Regional Energy Plan to Public Hearing: Chair Jodi French explained that the Executive Board voted to recommend that the Full Commission move the draft Windham Regional Energy Plan to public hearing. She asked Marion Major to present the regional energy planning process and an overview of what the regional energy plan contains. There was considerable discussion about the energy use assumptions made, including the exclusion of energy consumed by people traveling to the state and consumed while traveling within the state, as well as distribution operations whose energy consumption was counted as being in-state when the bulk of the driving was actually out of state. There were also concerns about assumptions related to energy targets, including those relating to efficiency measures that would be need to be achieved in the absence of large enough programs to support the goals. Marion and Chris explained that the same and similar concerns had been raised to the state and consultants who developed the metrics that underlie the standards by both the WRC and other regional planning commissions (RPCs). They also noted that those concerns notwithstanding, the data and related metrics are the basis for the standards established by the Department of Public Service that are to be used by all RPCs and towns seeking to develop Act 174-compliant energy planning elements. Questions were asked about how the WRC review of town plans would differ between those towns that were, or were not, seeking Act 174 determination of energy compliance. The Planning Coordination Committee has not yet determined what, if any, differentiation would be made. Greg Brown made a motion that the draft Windham Regional Energy Plan be moved to public hearing. Concerns were raised about the age and accuracy of the current Proposed Land Use map and its related boundaries, and the fact that the map was not updated concurrently with the Regional Energy Plan. Jodi noted language on page 37 of the draft plan that states updating of the maps is a priority, and that it was discussed at Executive Board that this would get underway in the very near term. Tim Arsenault seconded the motion. Charlie Goodwin called the question, seconded by Tim Arsenault. A roll call vote was held with four no votes, two abstentions, and 12 yes votes. A roll call vote was held on the motion. The motion passed with 13 yes votes, 5 no votes, and one abstention.

Jodi explained that the Executive Board recommended that the Full Commission consider whether or not the plan should be amended to require a one kilometer buffer between any utility scale wind tower and any residential structure. Chris suggested the proposed language be amended to say that utility scale wind towers shall be located not less than one kilometer from any residential structure. Eric Stevens questioned whether it was proper that the Executive Board discuss this issue as it was not on the Executive Board meeting agenda. John Whitman explained he attended the Executive Board meeting and Executive Director Chris Campany brought the issue up and that it had not been warned. Chris explained that he brought it to the Executive Board because he thought they should consider whether or not to bring the issue to the Full Commission because the last time the plan was before the Full Commission; the draft plan did not support any utility scale wind development. Now that it did, and because buffers between residences to wind towers has been a matter of much debate statewide, he thought it was relevant. Jodi felt the Executive Board acted appropriately as it recommended the amendment be considered by the Full Commission. Bill Dunkel moved for a vote upon the proposed amendment. The motion was seconded by Tim Arsenault. More conversation ensued about the basis for the one kilometer buffer, the lack of policy or scientific consensus on best practices, and that staff had not produced a map showing how such a buffer might limit wind.
development. Greg Brown called the question, seconded by John Whitman. On a roll call vote, the vote on the question passed with 16 yes votes, one no vote, and one abstention. Stephen Dotson had left the conference call. A roll call vote was held on the motion. The motion failed by a vote of 14 against, 3 in favor, and one abstention.

**Update on Vermont Yankee Sale:** Executive Director Chris Campany briefly summarized the sale proposal and the status of settlement agreement negotiations. He had been directed by the Executive Board to sign the WRC onto the settlement agreement if the new owner would be held to the same standards of any other industrial facility in the state. Chris explained that he could not divulge the details of what had been discussed, but noted where the agreement generally stood. He anticipated the WRC would sign onto the agreement unless there was a dramatic change before a Memorandum of Understanding was to be filed with the Public Utility Commission on Friday. Tim Arsenault expressed his appreciation for WRC engagement in the docket and support for Vernon in the proceedings.

**Update on Project Review Committee experience with the siting of solar developments on “preferred sites”:** This item was deferred to a future meeting when Project Review Committee Chair, Jack Cunningham, could be in attendance.

**On a motion by Charlie Goodwin, seconded by Tim Arsenault, meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:18 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,
Ashley Collins