Full Commission Meeting  
April 29, 2014  
Townshend Town Hall

Commissioners Present: Jodi French (Chair), Maggie Bartenhagen, Nick Bartenhagen, Tom Buchanan, Jenepher Burnell, Tom Consolino, Jack Cunningham, Craig Hunt, Emily Kunreuther, Alan LaCombe, Alice Maes, Ray Mara, Jane Morano-Purdy, Bill Murray, Steve Skibniowsky, Lew Sorenson, Eric Stevens, Andy Toepfer, Roger Turner, Piet van Loon, John Whitman, Norm Wright  
Citizen Interest Commissioners Present: Lynn Barrett, Gretchen Havreluk  
Staff Present: Chris Campany, Kim Smith, Ashley Collins

Introductions: There was a quorum of 18 towns present.

Convened: 7:40PM

The Full Commission meeting was preceded by a Public Hearing for the Regional Plan Update.

Administrative Items & Reports:
Secretary’s Report: On a motion by P. van Loon seconded by J. Cunningham, the minutes from the March meeting were approved with one abstention.
Financial Report: On a motion by R. Turner seconded by S. Skibniowsky, the Finance report was approved with one abstention.

Votes Subject to Ratification: On a motion by N. Wright, seconded by T. Buchanan to ratify the previous votes; ratification was approved for the following:
Marlboro Town Plan: On a motion by N. Wright, seconded by T. Buchanan, to ratify the approval of the Marlboro Town Plan Confirmation and Planning Process at the January 28th meeting; ratification was approved with one abstention.

It was noted that Commissioner attendance is an ongoing issue and the Executive Board has discussed various ways to improve attendance so that business requiring action does not get held up month to month. Among the methods discussed were: looking at ways to make the meetings more interesting to a wider range of Commissioners, providing Selectboards with attendance records, and considering a new time and day to meet.
Executive Director’s Report:

- Executive Director Chris Campany mentioned that the interview process for a new planner is underway and they have recently interviewed applicants and narrowed the search to two final candidates. He also noted that Cynthia Stoddard, Putney Town Manager, and Katie Buckley, Guilford Town Administrator will be sitting in on the interviews with the final two candidates.
- Chris explained that TransCanada has property in several towns in the Windham Region and the State has hired someone to develop a methodology to appraise the properties. When TransCanada appeals the process the town has to defend the appraisal amount even though it was the State’s appraisal, and not at the Town’s request. The Commission has been convening the affected towns within the region and this group has developed a draft white paper describing the issue. The goal is to find common ground with all affected towns in the state to work towards statutory changes to resolve this costly matter.
- Chris provided Commissioners with the Staff Summary of Activities for the month of March and gave a brief overview of the main highlights.

Conservation Subdivision: A Planning Tool

Executive Director Chris Campany gave a presentation on the concept of conservation subdivisions as a planning tool to reduce forest and habitat fragmentation, and how this tool can be implemented through policy and bylaws. Conservation subdivisions are intended to provide the same number of units as a conventional subdivision, but they are designed in a manner that locates houses and related infrastructure in a smaller footprint that best responds to site conditions. The goal is to preserve habitat within the subdivision and, ideally, connect that habitat to that which exists beyond the subdivision boundaries for greater continuity and integrity. There was opinion voiced by some Commissioners that people moving to Vermont were looking for houses on large lots in rural areas and that conservation subdivisions may not be marketable. The market challenge of developing any housing in the region was also discussed. Other Commissioners felt this model was worth pursuing, that it could be scaled for both large and small subdivisions, and that it is better to have this approach in place before new subdivisions are developed. Chris noted that the conservation subdivision approach is recommended in the draft regional plan and that attendees of public meetings suggested the Commission educate town officials and planning commissions about this approach. There seemed to be support from the Commissioners that the Commission pursue this outreach.

J. Cunningham moved to adjourn the meeting.
Meeting adjourned at 9:10PM

Respectfully submitted,
Ashley Collins