Full Commission Meeting  
March 31, 2015  
Townshend Town Hall

Commissioners Present: Jodi French (Chair), Maggie Bartenhagen, Sam Battaglino, Jenipher Burnell, Tom Consolino, Jack Cunningham, Charles Goodwin, Bradley Horn, Alan LaCombe, Alice Maes, Ray Mara, Edith Mas, Elizabeth McLoughlin, Georgianne Mora, Jane Morano Purdy, Denis Pinkernell, Lew Sorenson, Eric Stevens, Andy Toepfer, Piet van Loon, Nicolas Wallaert, John Whitman

Citizen Interest Commissioners Present: Greg Brown, Gretchen Havreluk, Prudence MacKinney

Guests Present: April Hensel, Robin Howe, Liisa Kissel, Bill Schmidt, Arthur Westing, Skip Lisle, Al Sands

Staff Present: Chris Campany, Susan McMahon, Jeff Nugent, Ashley Collins

Introductions: There was a quorum of 17 towns present.

Convened: 7:05PM

Executive Board: The Board convened in open session just prior to the Commission meeting to vote on a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) application for the Brattleboro Farmer’s Market (BFM) at the site of the former Planet gas station. The Board approved the $35,000 grant for the BFM Project.

Administrative Items & Reports:

Secretary’s Report: On a motion by J. Cunningham, seconded by T. Consolino the minutes from the January Meeting were approved with two abstentions.

Financial Report: On a motion by T. Consolino, seconded by J. Whitman the Finance Report was approved with one abstention.

History of WRC and Act 250:
Bill Schmidt provided some background information on the origin of WRC, and discussed the population growth and development in the region 1960’s. He explained that Mount Snow was developed in 1955 and by the late 1960’s there were 9 other ski areas in the region. In
May 1968, Brattleboro hosted the first Governor’s Day, this was meant to share what was happening with second home development in the region. In 1960, Governor Davis took a tour with WRC through Wilmington and Dover, the Haystack/Chimney Hill Development; which was one of the major resort residential developments in the valley. The Governor expressed concern with the water, septic, trash removal, and roads for school busses and emergency vehicles. Dover had 4,000 acres for development and divided it into six parcels, with approximately 500 lots on each parcel of land. A Government Advisory Task Force was formed to take on Haystack and other developments in the Deerfield Valley. The Dover Planning Board requested assistance from the Task Force for help with the 25 real estate developments that had no subdivision regulations. In 1970 Act 250 was in the works, and in 1972 the State Land Use Plan was drafted. There were hearings all over the State in 1973 and the proposed draft of State Land Use Plan was distributed; however, it did not pass by the Governor’s end of office term. In 1974 the State Planning Office prepared a land capability document to help guide planning on all levels.

April Hensel, District 2 Environmental Commission Coordinator with the Agency of Natural Resources was present to discuss the history of Act 250. She explained that since 1970 over 9,000 major cases resulted in hearings and 15,000 minor cases were issued permits with no hearings throughout the State. She provided some basic statistics on statewide cases versus cases in the Windham Region, and how major cases in the Windham Region have shaped Act 250 precedent. In 1986 Stratton/Jamaica was the defining case on how to protect wildlife habitat, with the south view application seeking 33 lots. It was denied at the hearings and at the Board level. Another case that got a lot of attention was C & S in 1992. A permit was issued with several conditions regarding air quality monitoring. In 1999 there were issues raised in Stratton specific to two streams that didn’t meet water quality standards and permits stopped being issued until a water quality remediation plan was established. The process for Master Plans was addressed, which included components such as water quality and wildlife habitat. She feels Act 250 establishes expectations for developers; the language in town plans must be specific to guide the developers throughout the process.

**Forest Stewardship:** WRC GIS Planner Jeff Nugent presented the Forest Stewardship project, including the process that began with former WRC Planner, Dinah Reed. The three main components of the project are: a report, municipal outreach, and a web mapping platform. The Report is located on WRC’s website and contains regional characteristics, facts, and values which came from the Regional Plan and consultation with a regional forest stewardship project steering committee. It includes information about threats, barriers, parcelization, invasive plants, and the economics of forest land owners. There are also strategies that towns can adopt to reduce forestland parcelization and fragmentation. The web mapping platform is primarily being done at the Agency of Natural Resources.
**Forest Economy Working Group Project Update:** WRC Associate Director Susan McMahon informed the Commissioners that the group will be working with the Brattleboro Museum and Arts Center and Catherine Cole, who has over 25 years of working with forest economy. Catherine Cole’s work will include stories and paintings that about forestry in the region and will be displayed from October to January. It will also include some field trips and discussions to promote education on forest economy.

**Citizen Interest Commission Appointment:** Bob Anderson of Grafton has expressed interest in serving as the Conservation Citizen Interest Commissioner. On a **motion** by J. Whitman, seconded by L. Sorenson the motion was approved to appoint Bob Anderson as the Conservation Citizen Interest Commissioner.

**Bylaw Amendment:** At the October 2014 Commission meeting, WRC Chair Jodi French presented the proposed bylaw amendments that the Executive Board reviewed. On a **motion** by D. Pinkernell, seconded by E. Mas, the proposed bylaw amendments were **approved**.

**Windham Town Plan:** A letter dated September, 2013 from the Grafton Selectboard to the WRC was presented by former Grafton Selectboard chair to the Commissioners which expressed opinions that the Windham Town Plan did not comport with state statute because it attempts to regulate industrial wind development in the town. The letter also asked that the Commission meet with the Grafton Selectboard. The presentation led to an extensive discussion about what Section 248 says about the standing of town plans in the Public Service Board process. There were also questions asked by Commissioners about why there was no meeting with the Grafton Selectboard in 2013. Planning Coordination Committee chair reviewed the process by which the plan was reviewed. The WRC received a request from the Town of Windham to review its plan for approval on January 26, 2015. The panel reviewed the town plan and reported their findings back to the Planning Coordination Committee (PCC). The PCC recommended approval of the plan, and confirmation of the town plan and process. J. Whitman made a **motion** to approve the plan as presented, and was seconded by J. Cunningham; motion was **approved**. On the confirmation of the town plan and process J. Cunningham made a **motion**, seconded by T. Consolino; motion was **approved by a majority vote**.

**Stratton Town Plan:** The WRC received a request from the Town of Stratton to review its plan for approval on January 15, 2015. The panel reviewed the town plan and reported their findings back to the Planning Coordination Committee (PCC). The PCC recommended approval of the plan, and confirmation of the town plan and process. A. LaCombe made a **motion** to approve the plan as presented, and was seconded by T. Consolino; motion was **approved**. On the confirmation of the town plan and process C. Goodwin made a **motion**, seconded by; motion was **approved**.

**Executive Director’s Report:**
- Chris mentioned that the Nuclear Decommissioning Advisory Panel is now being run by citizens, with Kate O’Connor serving as Chair.
May 5th there will be a Tri-State Region Meeting about the economic connections among the Windham Region, Cheshire County, NH, and Franklin County, MA.

Chris noted that the Municipal Shared Services meeting was a great success. 15 Towns were represented with over 30 people in attendance.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35PM

Respectfully submitted,
Ashley Collins