Full Commission Meeting
April 28, 2015
Townshend Town Hall

Commissioners Present: Norm Wright (Acting Chair), Maggie Bartenhagen, Nick Bartenhagen, Jenepher Burnell, Jack Cunningham, Liisa Kisel, Alan LaCombe, George Mora, Steve Skibniowsky, Lew Sorenson, Eric Stevens, Roger Turner, John Whitman,
Citizen Interest Commissioners Present: Greg Brown, Gretchen Havreluk, Prudence MacKinney
Guests Present: Sam Battaglino
Staff Present: Chris Campany, Ashley Collins

Introductions: There was not a quorum with only 10 towns present.

Convened: 7:05PM

Administrative Items & Reports:
Secretary's Report: On a motion by J. Cunningham, seconded by G. Mora the minutes from the March meeting were approved, with one abstention; subject to ratification at the next Commission meeting.
Financial Report: On a motion by L. Sorenson, seconded by G. Brown, the Finance report was approved; subject to ratification at the next Commission meeting.

Act 200: Greg Brown & Lew Sorenson
Lew Sorenson came to the Windham Regional Commission in 1987 with experience in Community and Regional Planning in California and Washington State. Greg Brown was the Director of Housing and Planning Development in the 1980’s when Vermont was experiencing a growth in population in the ski area communities; his primary role was to implement Act 200. He explained that Act 200 was the missing piece in Act 250, which should have had 3 parts but was missing the planning component. The Legislature reviewed the 47 section bill for Act 200 in the late 1980’s, which was later adopted. Greg’s job was to get the state agencies to follow procedure with the planning goals, which were a major part of the Bill. The law required that state agency plans be compatible with town plans, as well as programs and projects where the work was being done. They explained that in the 1989 the appropriation for associated planning was $1.5 million, and money was for RPC’s; who
were invited to help create the formula for the funds. In the 1990's the state revenues crashed and there were deficits in the state budget, and Act 200 was hard hit; money that was already distributed to the RPC’s needed to be returned to the State. Greg and Lew explained that there was a lot of citizen opposition with Act 200, and a process item in the Act had RPC’s reviewing and approving Town Plans. Citizens tried to get this piece removed from the process and establishing the “Take Back Vermont” campaign.

**Vernon Town Plan:** The WRC received a request from the Town of Vernon to review its plan for approval. 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. Due to a lack of a quorum at the current Full Commission meeting, J. Whitman made a motion to send the plan to the Executive Board for approval, seconded by J. Cunningham; motion was approved.

**Commission Discussion:** Chris provided the Commissioners with a handout of suggestions and ideas on how Commissioners can be more engaged with the Town Planning Process. Suggestions included: checking in with the town Planning Commission and Selectboard to see how things are going and if help is needed, offering WRC workshops, and having a good understanding of the timeline and process for adoption. Chris also explained that regional approval is primarily important for towns seeking specific state grants; regional approval has no effect on town plan standing in regulatory processes other than state designation programs. The Commissioners continued the discussion offering feedback and where they would like to see changes.

**Executive Director’s Report & Other Business:**
- Chris informed the Commissioners that a date has been set for the 50th Anniversary Celebration. It will take place on June 23, 2015 at the School for International Training (SIT) Campus.
- Chris reminded Commissioners that May 28th is the Basics of Town Planning training, taking place at the Townshend Town Hall from 6:30-8:30PM.
- WRC has been invited to Washington, DC by the National Association of Development Organizations and the International Economic Development Council to meet with federal agencies and other experienced local and regional leaders about resilience planning.
- The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is in the process of developing nuclear plant decommissioning policy. While in DC Chris intends to meet with the state’s Congressional delegation staff to ensure host communities have a substantive voice in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission rule promulgation process.
- Chris explained that WRC’s role in The Windham County Modern Wood Heating Project is to make sure towns are involved in each step of the process.
The next Commission meeting is scheduled for May 26th, and WRC is working to facilitate an Orientation for any Commissioner who is interested. It will likely take place ahead of a Full Commission meeting.

N. Wright moved adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 9:17PM

Respectfully submitted,
Ashley Collins