Full Commission Meeting
May 30, 2017
Townshend Town Hall

Commissioners Present: Andy Toepfer, Kevin Stine, Nicolas Wallaert, Lew Sorenson, Liisa Kissel, Gabrielle Ciuffreda, Peder Rude, Stephan Chait, Everett Wilson, Veda Bassett, Joel Bluming, Denis Pinkernell, Georgianne Mora, Piet van Loon, John Whitman, Alan LaCombe, Brad Horn, Jack Cunningham, Norm Wright, Stephen Dotson, Charles Goodwin, Kristine Sweeter, Jenepher Burnell, Tom Consolino, Carolyn Partridge
Citizen Interest Commissioners Present: Greg Brown, Wendy Harrison
Guests Present: Todd Smith – Brattleboro, Daniel Quip – Brattleboro, Michael Bosworth – Brattleboro,
Staff Present: Chris Campany
Introductions: There was a quorum of 18 towns present.
Convened: 7:08PM by Vice Chair Piet van Loon

Administrative Items & Reports:
Secretary’s Report: On a motion by T. Consolino seconded by J. Cunningham the minutes from the March meeting were approved with one amendment to add C. Goodwin and G Brown to the attendance list.
Financial Report: On a motion by N. Wright seconded by C. Goodwin the April Finance Report was approved.

Review of Overarching Regional Energy Plan Policy Considerations and Recommendations: Executive Director presented an overview of the policy direction recommendations for the draft regional energy plan that will be submitted at the end of June to the Department of Public Service for comment. Campany explained that this overview had previously been presented to a joint meeting of the Project Review, Natural Resources, Planning Coordination and Energy Committees at a special meeting, as well as the Executive Board. He stated that regional energy plans that receive Department of Public Service determination of conformity will serve as the basis for town plan Act 174 conformity determination by
regional commissions. It was noted that WRC had included an energy plan in their regional plan since the 1990’s. The proposal would preclude additional utility-scale wind development in the region beyond that currently being constructed in Readsboro and Searsburg, would generally preclude utility scale solar and other renewable energy generation in areas identified as “Resource Lands” in the regional plan, and would otherwise allow renewable energy development in “Productive Rural” and other areas with the same conditions and restrictions as would apply to any other development. For the purposes of this discussion and the proposed draft utility-scale solar was defined as an installation of 150 kW or greater, though this is open to considerable further discussion. In response to the presentation, several questions and suggestions were put forward. It was suggested that provision should be made to fund the decommissioning of solar panels by the developer, though it was also suggested that such a requirement should not be a deterrent to smaller-scale installations. Chris explained that the application of "substantial deference" by the Public Service Board would be unknown until the Board deliberates upon a petition in which the municipality and/or region request it. Per the current and draft board rules governing the Board’s consideration of solar energy generation, towns should now begin specifying land use policies for solar in their town plans including, if possible, what specific parcels are preferred. Concerns were raised that the policy was too restrictive against smaller wind installations that would not be industrial in scale, but which would still be considered a commercial generator. The same concern was voiced about solar installations, and that the 150 kW threshold was perhaps too low. Chris explained that the draft to be submitted to the Department for comment would come back to the WRC, at which point the Commission could continue its deliberations and policy development, including more extensive public outreach. After some further discussion, Greg Brown moved that the Executive Director present the policy direction as proposed to the Department of Public Service. Motion was seconded by Jack and was passed by an affirmative vote with three abstentions and no neas.

**WRC Transportation Committee Report:** Commissioner Lew Sorenson presented the WRC’s transportation prioritization process, including the ranking criteria, outreach to towns, and the decision-making process of the committee. He also provided examples of specific projects that were under consideration during this round.

**Planning Coordination Committee:** Adoption of Policy Related to the Review and Approval of Draft Plans – Planning Coordination Committee Chair Piet van Loon presented the policy it suggests the WRC follow when asked by a town to approve a plan that has not yet been adopted by the Selectboard. The policy was previously submitted to the Executive Board for review and comment. It suggested the policy be brought to the Full Commission with its recommendation. On a motion by Piet, seconded by Norm, the policy was adopted by a unanimous vote.
Consideration of a 6:00 p.m. Start Time for All Full Commission Meetings: The Executive Board submitted to the Full Commission its recommendation that all Full Commission meetings begin at 6 p.m. This would be a change from the policy that stipulated that Full Commission meetings would begin at 6 p.m. for the months of October through March, and at 7 p.m. for the months of April through September. On a motion by Jack, seconded by Stephen, the motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Executive Director’s Report: Chris provided a brief overview of the status of the petition by NorthStar to purchase Vermont Yankee from Entergy for the purpose of decommissioning and site restoration.

Committee Chair Updates: None

C. Goodwin moved to adjourn the meeting.
Meeting adjourned at 9:10PM

Respectfully submitted,
Ashley Collins