Full Commission Meeting  
November 29, 2011  
The Grafton Inn, 2 Main Street, Grafton, VT

Commissioners Present: Elaine Beckwith, Fred Bullock, Melinda Bussino, Charlie Goodwin, John Kristensen, Alan LaCombe, Alice Maes, Priscilla Margola, Denis Pinkernell, Lew Sorenson, Bob Spencer, Eric Stevens, Tim Stevenson, Andy Toepfer, Piet van Loon, John Whitman,

Citizen Interest Commissioners Present: Corky Elwell, Lynette Hamilton,

Guests Present: Bob Allen, The Windham Foundation, Paul Normandeau

Staff Present: Chris Campany, Ashley Collins

Introductions: There was a quorum of 13 towns present.

Convened: 7:41pm

Administrative Items & Reports:

Secretary's Report: On a motion by John Whitman, seconded by Fred Bullock, the minutes from the September meeting were approved.

Financial Report: On a motion by Charlie Goodwin, seconded by Denis Pinkernell, the Finance report was approved.

Guest Speaker – Bob Allen, President of the Windham Foundation was present to discuss sustainable business development in the Windham Region. Mr. Allen gave a brief history of his career with The Vermont Country Store, in Weston, VT and his transition into his current position at The Windham Foundation. Most of the presentation was about the business plan for the Retreat Farm/Grafton Village Cheese enterprise on Route 30 in Brattleboro. In addition to the challenge of marketing the cheese that is already produced, and increasing the market so the full capacity of the plant can be utilized, the Foundation needs to develop a use and business plan to fully utilize the site within the context of the preservation easements that are in place. Commissioners offered thoughts and suggestions on possible ways to improve the business development by utilizing the acreage and idle buildings that are available. It was noted that the Windham Regional Commission, through Associate Director Susan McMahon, participated in the organization of a 10-day workshop through the Center for Creative Solutions with Marlboro College and Michael Singer Studios that would have focused on the planning and design of the Retreat Farm site. The Center
subsequently postponed the workshop because they didn’t have enough lead time to advertise the workshop to attract participants.

Executive Director’s Report:

1. *Streams and Rivers:* WRC began working with the eleven priority Towns identified by ANR to describe and map problems with the rivers and streams such as debris piles, sand and gravel bars, and slumps and landslides that threaten public and private infrastructure. The WRC and other RPCs in the hardest hit areas are under contract with The Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) to accomplish this work. The WRC has offered to provide the same service to Towns that were not identified by ANR as priority Towns.

2. Chris gave a brief summary of the total transportation impacts caused by Irene and explained that this detailed information is available on the WRC website.

3. *Re-powering America:* The Windham Regional Commission, in partnership with the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, submitted a proposal to the U.S. EPA, to have the U.S. Department of Energy National Renewable Energy Laboratory assess the feasibility of the development of a renewable energy project on the Basketville site in Putney. This is not a grant program; the WRC will receive no funds, but the feasibility study will be conducted. The Town of Putney, Basketville, and Putney Paper all contributed to the application and have agreed to participate in the assessment.

4. Chris announced the hiring of WRC’s newest Planner, Cullen Meves, who will begin working just after the New Year. He also explained the changes regarding staff assignments, and that those changes would be taking effect after the New Year.

5. Chris suggested to the Vermont Recovery Team that towns be surveyed about their fiscal status so the legislature would have a picture of what needs exist or will exist. He helped develop the survey that will be administered by VLCT.

6. Chris mentioned that the combined Road Foreman and Natural Resources Committee meeting that made use of the ANR river flume demonstration was a success and interesting to watch.

Other Business:

Eric Stevens suggested that Commissioners should be taking part in the WRC’s emergency planning efforts, in addition to the Commission’s affiliation with the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). It was suggested that this be an Executive Board agenda item at the next meeting, and/or a possible cross town talk.

Alice Maes mentioned that Michael Billingsly spoke at the Putney Library for Transition Putney regarding solar flares and suggested that the WRC consider having him as a possible speaker at a future commission meeting.
Charlie Goodwin moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by all present.

**Meeting adjourned at 9:30pm**

Respectfully submitted,
Ashley Collins