Full Commission Meeting  
March 27, 2012  
Townshend Town Hall, Townshend, VT


Citizen Interest Commissioners Present: Lynette Hamilton,

Staff Present: Chris Campany, Cullen Meves, Dinah Reed, Ashley Collins

Introductions: There was a quorum of 20 towns present.

Convened: 7:32pm

Administrative Items & Reports:

Secretary’s Report: On a motion by Tom Buchanan, seconded by Jack Cunningham, the minutes from the February meeting were approved.

Financial Report: On a motion by Jack Cunningham, seconded by Denis Pinkernell, the February Finance report was approved.

Program:

April Hensel, District 2 Environmental Commission Coordinator, was present to speak to the Commission about local, regional, and state roles in the Act 250 process, and proposed changes to the appeals process. She noted that towns that have zoning and subdivision regulations generally are not as engaged in the Act 250 processes as those that do not. She explained the specific project parameters that trigger an Act 250 review, and how towns and RPCs are statutory parties to the process. RPC’s review applications and then decide if they want to get involved in a project based on its regional importance and significance. She highlighted the development review of Stratton Mountain, explaining that it was not approved initially due to water quality issues. She feels that Stratton has since been making improvements over the last decade to improve these and other issues. She noted that while some RPCs focus primarily on criterion 10, that RPCs can comment on and appeal on any of the criteria. There was a question about proposed changes to the appeal process related to major projects. The legislature and the NRB are considering an “on the record review” process. Under this new proposed process, the hearing would be videotaped and that would be part of the official record that would be considered by the environmental court. The environmental court would then decide if errors were made that need to be corrected. There are some concerns regarding
this sort of review, including how citizen user-friendly it is. The possibility of trying the process on a
trial basis in a few districts is also being discussed.
April discussed how criterion ten is looked at in the Act 250 process. She explained that town and
regional plans should conform to one another. A conflict exists when one plan (regional or town)
allows the project but the other does not. Where local and regional plans do conflict, the regional
plan is given effect only if it is demonstrated that the project under consideration would have a
substantial regional impact.
Policy language in regional and town plans should be clear and specific. Policies that explain what
“shall” be done have more weight than policies that explain what “should” be done or what should be
“encouraged.” April recognized the political challenge associated with being specific, and explained
that some towns and planning commissions opt to use “shall” only in cases where they plan to firmly
stand their ground in the review process.

**Action Item:**
On a motion by Tom Buchanan, seconded by Charlie Goodwin, the amendments to the Commission
Bylaws proposed revisions were approved.

**Executive Director’s Report & Other Business:**
1. Chris explained that the Executive Board has two vacant slots to fill for the remainder of the
current term which runs with the fiscal year through September 30, 2012. On behalf of the Nominating Committee chair, Carolyn Partridge, Chris encouraged Commissioners to
volunteer or nominate a fellow Commissioner whom they would like to see on the Board. Nominations can be sent to Chris or Carolyn Partridge, the Chair of the Nominating Committee. The Commission will vote on filling these positions at the April Commission Meeting. The Commission will also vote on a new Chair.
2. Chris explained that the Executive Board had voted to make a memorial contribution in the amount of $500 to the Brattleboro Area Drop-In Center in honor of long-time Director, and Chair of the Commission, Melinda Bussino. He also proposed that a Resolution be drafted by next month’s Commission meeting.
3. *Enhanced Consultation:* Rockingham Commissioner and Chair of the Planning Coordination Committee, Alan LaCombe, and Chris Campany gave an outline of the Enhanced Consultations that are required by our contract with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to be completed with each town. Consultations with at least one-third of the WRC’s towns are to be complete by the end of June, and the Committee has developed a strategy to accomplish this. Alan explained that he has worked with WRC Planner, John Bennett to come up with a consultation schedule. This was determined by looking at expiration dates of town plans, as well as towns that the WRC is currently working with. Alan also explained that the PCC would review the WRC municipal planning process as a whole, and how enhanced consultations can play an important and valuable role in that process.

Charlie Goodwin moved adjournment.
Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm
Respectfully submitted,
Ashley Collins