Natural Resources Committee  
Oct. 16, 2013 meeting

Attendance  
Commissioners: Andy Toepfer, John Whitman, Lynn Hamilton, Steve Skibniowsky, Mal Herbert, Maggie Bartenhagen, Nick Bartenhagen  
Staff: Dinah Reed  

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm  

Minutes - Draft Minutes of the September meeting, moved to be accepted as written, but recommend they be more explained in more detail.  

Discussion of Update to Regional Plan – Natural Resources Chapter Summary & Policies  
- Starting where we left off, with Mineral Resources under the Policy Section –  
  - Combine Policy #1 and #2 to read: Gravel resources are necessary and important to the region. Ensure that the extraction process shall not have negative impact on groundwater, surface waters, recreation sites, scenic areas, and special community resources. Best practices are to be used to minimize dust, noise, and air quality.  
  - Policy #3 to read: Require that effective site rehabilitation plans are provided and implemented for new projects. (Reference the VT rehabilitation plan pamphlet.)  
- Under Natural Areas, Fragile Areas, and Wildlife Resources Policy Section –  
  - Policy #1 to read: Protect Natural Areas, Fragile Areas, and critical important plant and animal habitats. If necessary…..(keep the rest).  
  - Combine Policy #2 and #3 to read: Protect Natural and Fragile Areas, important plant and animal habitats, and wildlife corridors from development. When development…. (keep the rest).  
  - Policy #4 to read: Support state, federal, and conservation group acquisition of land and/or conservation easements to protect and connect important wildlife habitats. Encourage designation of State Natural and Fragile Areas. (delete rest of sentence…. for significant features and resources.)  
  - Policy #5 – keep  
- Air Quality Policy –  
  - Committee felt that the State regulations on air and noise would suffice for this section.  
  - Change Policy #1 to read: Development and activities shall meet State and Federal standards for air quality and noise.  
  - Delete policies 2-5.
• Scenic Resources Policy Section –
  o Change Policy #1 to read: Encourage towns to identify their scenic resources and support efforts to enhance and maintain those resources.
  o Policy #2 changed to read: Encourage scenic easements and implement appraisal practices that encourage donation of scenic easements…..
  o Policies #3-9: Keep as is.

General Comments about Land Use Chapter –
• Committee members mentioned that many towns do not really know enough about zoning, and what it means to have zoning, and that they need help.
• It was suggested that WRC planners could hold workshops/tutorials on zoning practices for Town Officials.

Forestry Stewardship Project
• Dinah briefly explained the project to the Committee.

Current Use Meeting held in Montpelier -
• John Whitman attended the meeting. An appraisal issue was described by a couple who bought a large farmhouse with land they intend to farm. They are in the Current Use program where they have a discounted rate in taxes on their land. However, the house on the land has exorbitant taxes that far outweigh the benefit of land in Current Use. This issue needs to be addressed for fairness, possibly working with Town Listers, or changing the policy on appraisal practices within this program.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Dinah Reed