

**Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission
October 12, 2016
Approved October 26, 2016**

Members Present: Maggie Gordon, Barbara Forauer, James Donegan, Dennis Place, Joe Iadanza, Rolf Kielman

Members Absent: John Kiedaisch, Russell Fox, Jeff French

Public Present: Bill Marks

Also Present: Dawn Morgan (Recording Secretary) and Alex Weinhagen (Director of Planning & Zoning)

Joe I. chaired the meeting, which was called to order at 7:32 pm.

Agenda Changes: None.

Public Comments for Non-Agenda Items: None.

Renewable Energy Siting

• **Overview of Chittenden County regional planning effort**

Alex W. summarized a presentation and accompanying memo from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC). He explained that Act 174 (signed into law in 2016) requires all regional planning commissions to develop an energy plan to reach the State's goal of having 90% of Vermont's energy usage come from renewable sources by 2050.

Alex W. said that town and municipal plans need to meet certain requirements if they want the Public Service Board (PSB) to give substantial deference to their plan recommendations when the PSB hears new applications for renewable energy projects.

Alex W. said that one requirement is that plans need to include an analysis of energy usage and create targets to meet State guidelines by 2050. He said another requirement is to provide clarity on where these facilities should, or should not, be installed.

Alex W. continued by saying that if towns or municipalities meet these two guidelines, then they can request a certification from the Department of Public Service. If certification is approved, then the PSB would give substantial deference to plan recommendations of where facilities should, or should not, go.

Alex W. went on to explain that regional planning commissions will receive certification of their plans from the Department of Public Service and then towns and municipalities will receive certification from

their regional commission. He said that the CCRPC has set a short time horizon to update their plan and acquire their certification to make it easier for member towns and municipalities to receive certification.

Alex W. said that the CCRPC will take care of the analysis portion of the requirements.

- **High potential areas – solar and wind**

Alex W. explained that the CCRPC has created a map detailing areas of high solar and wind potential. They are now asking for input from towns and municipalities regarding areas that overlap with sensitive features. The CCRPC has requested feedback by November 1st.

- **Regional constraints – level 1 and level 2**

Alex W. noted that the CCRPC memo lists 2 levels of constraints, as defined by the State.

Level 1 indicates areas where ecological and physical conditions would very likely prevent the development of facilities. Level 2 indicates areas where ecological and physical conditions may make the development of facilities less feasible, but would not necessarily prevent it.

- **Local constraints – identifying areas to avoid**

Alex W. said that the CCRPC would like to know if towns and municipalities have any areas to add to the list of level 1 & 2 constraints. He said they would also like to know if there are things specific to Hinesburg that the Commission would like to add.

There was discussion regarding the Level 1 and Level 2 definitions and the potential ramifications for Hinesburg. There was also discussion regarding energy credits and whether energy credits created by projects would benefit the State's efforts or if the credits would be sold to another state. Bill Marks said the Conservation Commission feels projects that sell renewable energy credits out of State don't help achieve Vermont's energy goals.

The Commission agreed that the basic primary and secondary resources are acceptable with a few modifications and suggestions. Joe I. recommend adding conserved land as a Level 1 resource, and there was general consensus from other Commissioners on this. Maggie G. was concerned about impacts to core wildlife habitat and forest areas – especially in the eastern hill portion of town that are mapped as having potential for commercial and industrial wind. There was also discussion about avoiding large renewable energy installations that would displace development potential in areas planned for growth – e.g., village growth area and Industrial 1 zoning district. Especially in these locations, but also town-wide, renewable energy installations are preferred in association with already developed/impacted land – e.g., on buildings, old landfill site, reclaimed gravel pits, co-located with parking lots, etc.

Alex W. suggested adding an explanation to the recommendations that this is an ongoing conversation in Hinesburg as the Commission is currently reworking the Town Plan (where this topic is addressed) and is waiting for public feedback. Alex W. also suggested recommending changing the State's language in Level 2 to say "potentially unacceptable" for development, rather than the State's language of "less

feasible”. Alex W. also suggested adding feedback about the Conservation Commission’s concern of whether energy credits will benefit VT or other states.

Alex W. will draft a memo and present it to the Commission for review at the next meeting.

Minutes of 09/28/16 Meeting: Maggie G. **made a motion to approve the 09/28/16 minutes as amended** and Rolf K. **seconded the motion**. The Board voted **6-0**.

Other Business & Correspondence:

FY2017 Municipal Planning Grant Application – zoning regulations overhaul: Alex W. discussed the grant application and the Chair signed.

Town Plan – community outreach ahead of 11/9 public hearing: Alex W. said that he will be posting a note on the Front Porch Forum about the hearing and encouraged Commission members to also reach out to the community. He said that townspeople do not need to be present to provide feedback, they may provide feedback informally prior to the hearing via email or by talking directly with Commission members or staff.

Alex W. announced that the Town has hired Mitchel Cypes as the new DRB Coordinator and the Town will be posting a job opening for the Zone Administrator position soon.

Joe I. **made a motion to close the meeting and adjourn**. Rolf K. **seconded the motion**. The Board voted **6-0**. The meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dawn Morgan, Recording Secretary