

**Town of Hinesburg  
Planning Commission  
October 26, 2016  
Approved November 9, 2016**

Members Present: Maggie Gordon, Rolf Kielman, John Kiedaisch, Russell Fox, Joe Iadanza, Barbara Forauer, Jeff French, James Donegan

Members Absent: Dennis Place

Public Present: Brian Thibault, Tim Isham, Chuck Reiss

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**

- Review draft feedback for regional planning commission

Barbara F. said she felt the wording of the draft could be more powerful. She made several suggestions to strengthen the wording of the letter and there was general discussion about the appropriate tone to set for the feedback.

Barbara F. and John K. inquired as to the meaning of the word “retired” in relation to energy credits. Alex W. explained that energy developers can sell energy credits to a utility located outside of VT. He said that sold credits won’t count toward VT’s energy goals unless they remain in the state. Alex W. then said that if credits are retired that means that they are no longer being traded or sold.

James D. said that he does not necessarily agree with recommending installations be avoided in industrial areas. He said that he would prefer seeing solar panels, for example, in and around other buildings and industry, as opposed to in open farmland. Alex W. noted that industrial areas are currently listed as level 2, meaning to minimize impact but not necessarily avoid development. Rolf K. also noted that the definition of level 2 says “consider”, meaning that a proposal in that area would require further thought.

Joe I. said that the letter not only serves as feedback to the commission, but will also set the stage for Hinesburg's mapped areas for constrained renewable development. Discussion followed about the Town's goals for a walkable community, how renewable projects would best align with those goals. The group decided that it makes sense to include language regarding the preferred location in these areas being accessory and secondary use (e.g. on existing building rooftops).

Alex W. reminded the Commission that this feedback is the beginning of an analytical mapping process for the CCRPC. He noted that once the map is put together they may find that there is enough developable area that there won't be much need to look into the level 1 and level 2 areas, but there will be additional opportunities for feedback as things progress. Alex W. also mentioned that the CCRPC has funding available to work with 3 municipalities in Chittenden county, and once the Town Plan is complete Hinesburg might be interested in participating as a way to help steer the process.

Alex W. said he will make the changes and proceed.

### **Magee Hill Road Solar Array – Encore Renewable Energy PSB Application**

Alex W. reviewed for the Commission their letter written in June to Encore and the PSB saying that this was a good project that fits within the screening guidelines. However, the letter also recommended that Encore should continue to work with neighbors to address any issues that have been raised.

Brian Thibault (neighbor) said that he had a meeting with Encore and they discussed a project located in Stowe where screening included the use of a berm. Brian T. said he went to look at the project and didn't feel the berm had the screening effect that Encore said it would have. Brian T. said that he had further discussions with Encore about the possibility of setting up an on-site visual so neighbors could get a better feel for where berms and screening will be placed in relation to the project. Brian T. also mentioned that part of the natural screening foliage included European Buckthorn, which is an invasive that Encore said they plan to remove. Brian T. went on to discuss the project and his concerns in further detail, particularly on the eastern side of the project. He said that from his perspective, Encore has continued with their original plan and has made only minor changes.

Alex W. asked if Brian's T. concerns could be summarized by saying that neighbors do not feel as though their concerns have been addressed and that they will participate in the PSB process in opposition to the project. Brian T. confirmed that this was correct.

*Note: Chuck Reiss arrived at the end of the meeting, but his comments are included in this section for the purpose of continuity.*

Chuck Reiss said that he feels it has been helpful to have the neighborhood involved. Chuck R. said that the Energy Committee has met with both Encore and neighbors and the Committee feels comfortable with the project at this point. Chuck R. said that it has been a process, but he feels that Encore and the neighbors are coming closer to agreement. Chuck R. said that Encore has made some accommodations and the Energy Committee feels that this process has worked.

Alex W. asked the Commission if, based on Brian T.'s feedback, they want to get more involved with the PSB process. Joe I. noted that they have already sent a letter to the PSB indicating support for the project, provided Encore works effectively with the neighbors. Joe I said that he is not sure that there would much impact to becoming involved further. There was discussion about whether it could be beneficial for the Commission from an educational standpoint. There was further discussion as to whether the Commission's participation would help guide the PSB in interpreting the Town's new screening regulations.

Alex W. said that he would find out more about the process and potential timing constraints. He said, depending on deadlines, the Commission may need to call a special meeting or plan to meet after the public hearing on Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> to discuss this further.

**Minutes of 10/12/16 Meeting:** Rolf K. **made a motion to approve the 10/12/16 minutes as amended** and Barbara F. **seconded the motion**. The Board voted **6-0**. Russel F. & Jeff F. abstained

**Other Business & Correspondence:**

- **Feedback to date on draft Town Plan** – Alex W. reminded the Commission about emails he sent them with feedback on the Plan. He said that he continues to encourage community involvement and Commissioners are welcome to do the same.
- **Preparation for Town Plan hearing on 11/9 – hearing format, baking assignments, outreach** – Alex W. said that the hearing will take place upstairs at 7:00 pm (instead of the regular 7:30 pm meeting time). The group agreed that Alex W. will provide a brief introduction and then open the meeting up for public discussion. There was a brief discussion about meeting logistics.

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 8:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dawn Morgan, Recording Secretary