

1 **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING**
2 **NORTHWEST REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**
3 August 25, 2010 Draft Meeting Minutes
4

5 The meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held at F-GI Training Center in Swanton, VT.
6

7 Commissioners: See attached. A quorum was present to conduct business.

8 Staff: C. Dimitruk, S. Coleman and B. Remmers

9 Guests: Yvon Dandurand, Scott Choiniere, Bill Rowell, Adrian Rainville, Eric Dandurand, Alyce
10 Columb
11

12 **Welcome, introductions, opening remarks**

13 Chair M. Guernsey began the meeting at 7:02 p.m. followed by roll call attendance.
14

15 **Opportunity for Public Comment**

16 None.
17

18 **Draft Long Range Transportation Plan - Public Hearing**

19 M. Guernsey opened the hearing on the draft Long Range Transportation Plan at 7:05. There
20 was no comment from the public. M. Guernsey closed the hearing at 7:06.
21

22 **Morses Line Border Crossing**

23 The border crossing at Morses Line is slated to be closed. Y. Dandurand and other guests from
24 Highgate and Franklin were asking for support to keep the crossing opening. C. Dimitruk noted
25 Senator Leahy's office had requested NRPC staff to provide technical assistance to this effort but
26 the NRPC has not taken a position on this issue up to this point. B. Rowell and S. Choiniere
27 outlined some of the reasons they believe the crossing should remain open including fire mutual
28 aid with Canada and impacts to the local economy and culture of the greater border
29 community. Closing the crossing would take away a valuable piece of infrastructure. It was
30 noted that keeping the border open at Morses Line in a way that is fair to all parties involved
31 would be a first step. The Franklin and Highgate Selectboards are holding a public assembly on
32 the crossing at 10 a.m. on September 25th at the Franklin Central School.
33

34 Board members discussed the events that led up to the closure announcement. K. Waite asked if
35 there would be a requirement to have the NRPC review the project in the future. B. Buermann
36 asked if the NRPC would be in conflict if the board supported keeping the crossing open and the
37 project was later reviewed under Act 250. C. Dimitruk explained that because it would be a
38 federal project, it would most likely be exempt from Act 250 and local review. S. Coleman said
39 that Secretary Napolitano has issued a letter slating the crossing for closure. There will be a
40 public comment period beginning in January. P. Larner asked about the economic impacts of
41 closing the port because it is not a truck crossing. E. Dandurand said that trucks are able to get a
42 permit to use the crossing and some companies use the crossing when there are delays at the
43 Highgate Springs crossing. L. Touchette noted that if the board chose to support keeping the
44 crossing open, he would abstain from voting because of his close relationship with the Rainville
45 family.
46

1 *C. Leach motioned to support keeping the Morses Line Border Crossing open. R. Roberge*
2 *seconded. The motion carried with three abstentions, L. Touchette, D. DeBevec and P. Larner.*

3
4 **Minutes of the June 2010 Meeting**

5 It was noted that page 3, line 16-17 should read, “may award the tax credit.”

6 *M. Savoy motioned to accept the minutes with corrections. L. Touchette seconded. The motion*
7 *carried.*

8
9 **Commission Reports**

10
11 Finance/Operations: H. Garrett noted that the committee did not meet in July. He explained that
12 there were negatives in the financial report because it was the beginning of the fiscal year. The
13 committee would meet in September to review the first quarter and set the municipal rate. Board
14 members discussed whether the financial reporting format could be changed to avoid confusion
15 over the negative balances. *L. Touchette motioned to accept the financial report. P. Larner*
16 *seconded. The motion carried.*

17
18 Personnel: L. Scangas explained that the personnel committee met last week to review annual
19 evaluations. He noted that staff has done a very good job over the last year.

20
21 Executive Committee: M. Guernsey reported that the executive committee met prior to the
22 board meeting and discussed the joint meeting of NRPC, FDIDC and WIB boards that is
23 required by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. The committee also
24 discussed options for the annual dinner. In the past it has been done in the fall but there is a tight
25 schedule this year because of the required joint meeting. The annual dinner could be held next
26 spring. C. Dimitruk was asked how much is budgeted for the dinner and she said that \$2,200
27 was budgeted for the event.

28
29 Policy/Project Review: C. Steen explained that PPR had not met but would be meeting next
30 month.

31
32 Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC): D. Leslie announced that Raymond Larose had
33 stepped down TAC. D. Leslie thanked him for his service on the committee, especially the many
34 years as chair. Paul Hansen and D. Leslie were both nominated for the position of chair and
35 elections would be held in September.

36
37 Energy Committee: B. Buermann explained the NRPC has selected contractors to complete the
38 municipal building energy audits and they are starting to schedule the audits.

39
40 VT Association of Planning and Development Agencies: B. Kittell noted that there will be a
41 meeting in September.

42
43 Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC): No report.

44
45 Downtown Development Board: No report.

1 Office:

2 C. Dimitruk reported that NRPC submitted a grant to complete form-based codes guidebook and
3 assisted the City of St. Albans with a grant for streetscape improvements. NRPC has also
4 revised our internal controls so that bank deposits and the recording of deposits are done by
5 different staff members. G. Brunswick is completing her work developing a procedures manual
6 for the Brownfields RLF.

7
8 S. Coleman explained that he has been spending time providing technical assistance to Highgate
9 and Franklin on the Morses Line border crossing issue. He reported that Ryan Road in Fairfield
10 received a federal mitigation grant of \$100,000. They were successful in part because of the
11 mitigation planning provided by NRPC.

12
13 B. Remmers explained that she has been serving as the municipal project manager for the
14 Bakersfield Sidewalk Project which has gone to construction and is near completion. She will
15 also begin serving as the project manager for the Alburgh Streetscape Project which is in the
16 design phase.

17
18 **Draft Long Range Transportation Plan**

19 Board members offered comments on the draft plan. K. Waite noted that the bridge on 104A is a
20 very important structure for the Town of Georgia but is currently in poor condition and very
21 narrow. C. Leach asked if the state's van pool program is still in existence, and if it is, it could
22 be discussed in the plan. N. Hunt discussed the possibility of expanding public transit service for
23 Bakersfield along the VT 36 and/or VT 108 corridors especially for senior populations.

24
25 **Committee Assignments**

26 M. Guernsey presented the proposed committee assignment list which requires ratification by the
27 Board. *L. Touchette moved to accept the committee assignments. N. Spear seconded. The motion*
28 *carried.*

29
30 **Highgate and Montgomery Town Plan Approval and Confirmation**

31 M. Savoy reported on the plan approval committee's review of the Montgomery and Highgate Town
32 plans and recommended approval. *K. Waite motioned to approve the town plans for Montgomery*
33 *and Highgate. L. Touchette seconded. The motion carried.*

34
35 C. Dimitruk noted that both municipalities now met the criteria for confirmation as required by
36 state statute including dedicating funds to municipal and regional planning, demonstrating a
37 continuing planning process and having a confirmed town plan. *L. Scangas motioned to confirm*
38 *Montgomery and Highgate. C. Steen seconded. The motion carried.*

39
40 **Other Business**

41 M. Guernsey announced that there would be a ceremony and parade to dedicate the relocated
42 Sand Bar Memorial Flag on 9/11/2010.

43
44 **Adjourn**

45 *R. Roberge motioned to adjourn. C. Steen seconded. Motion carried.*

1 The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.