

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
NORTHWEST REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
May 25, 2011 Draft Meeting Minutes

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

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

Staff: C. Dimitruk and B. Remmers

Guests: Senator Sara Kittell and Secretary Chuck Ross (Agriculture, Food and Markets)

Welcome, introductions, opening remarks

Chair M. Guernsey began the meeting at 7:00 p.m. followed by roll call attendance.

Opportunity for Public Comment

Senator Kittell spoke about the past legislative session. She noted that the legislature aimed to preserve government programs while balancing the budget.

Minutes of the March 2011 Meeting

L. Touchette moved to accept the minutes. D. DeBevec seconded. The motion carried.

Guest: Chuck Ross, Secretary Agriculture, Food and Markets

Secretary Ross described the diversity of Vermont's agriculture. He noted that the state had both small and large farms that have expanded into new fields such as cheese production, organic products and energy generation/efficiency. He feels the role of the Agriculture, Food and Markets Department is to promote all agriculture in Vermont, help dairy diversify and support non-dairy as well.

B. Buermann voiced concern over potential changes to current use and the lack of slaughter houses in the region. Senator Kittell stressed that current use was the most critical element for retaining the working landscape. Secretary Ross recognized that the lack of post-production facilities was a problem and explained that the Agency was trying to help. He said that government alone cannot fix this problem and the non-profit and private sector needs to help deal with this issue. D. Leslie raised concerns over water quality in Lake Champlain. Secretary Ross recognized that there is a water quality issue and we all own it.

Commission Reports

Finance/Operations: H. Garrett noted that the committee did not meet since last month. He explained that the budget is in good shape with 25% of the year left and having expended about 80% of the annual funds so far.

Personnel: No report.

Executive Committee: No report.

Policy/Project Review: C. Steen reported that the PPR committee did not meet in May but the April report was included in the board packets.

J. Baitz motioned to ratify the report from the Policy/Project review committee. L. Scangas seconded. The motion carried.

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC): D. Leslie reported that at the May 12th meeting, the TAC reviewed an initial draft of NRPC's FY 2012 work program for the Transportation Planning Initiative. The final FY 2012 TPI work program will be reviewed at the June 10 TAC meeting and then presented at the June 29 board meeting. In addition to the FY 2012 work program, the TAC discussed the impact of recent flooding on state and local infrastructure.

Energy Committee: B. Buermann explained the committee is working on awarding the remaining energy audit funds to municipalities.

VT Association of Planning and Development Agencies: The annual meeting will be held June 2nd.

Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC): No report.

Downtown Development Board: No report.

Office:

C. Dimitruk reported that the NRPC has submitted several Section 319 storm water grant proposals. One would be to coordinate to offer a series of on-site trainings for municipal planning commissions, selectboards and zoning administrators and develop locally-specific bylaw and plan language for adoption. Another would fund a series of trainings for municipal road crews and owners and managers of private roads and driveways. The NRPC also assisted the Northwestern Medical Center with their Section 319 proposal for stormwater retrofits.

C. Dimitruk reported that the NRPC is working on bylaw or town plan updates for a number of regional communities including St. Albans City, Montgomery, Franklin, North Hero and Enosburgh.

B. Remmers reported that she attended a US/Canada Cross Border Rail Peer Exchange where the issue of resorting passenger service to Montreal was discussed. She also noted that the field season has begun and the NRPC is available to complete traffic counts and culvert assessments. She announced that this spring, summer and fall the NRPC is hosting a series of workshops focusing on best management practices for road maintenance. The workshop focuses on a new technique or product and participating towns receive free erosion control materials. The workshops are funded with a 319 grant. K. Waite recommended that there be a certification process for road foreman who complete the workshop series.

2011 Flood Event

C. Dimitruk briefed the board on flood recovery efforts and the support the NRPC is providing. She explained that this has been an open-ended flood event since April 23 which has made it difficult to assess damages. FEMA is working to determine if an individual assistance declaration is justified. The NRPC has been coordinating conference calls between local EMDs, municipal officials and agencies and VEM. Staff has also assisted towns with the local declaration process, damage reporting and resource request process. The NRPC will be offering an NFIP zoning administer workshop for communities and shoreline erosion control workshops. Residents should call 211 to report damages. K. Waited thanked the NRPC staff, specifically Shaun Coleman, for the support they have provided to communities during this flood event.

Other Business

M. Savoy announced that the Franklin/Grand Isle Workforce Investment Board would be hosting a certification training for contractors working on pre-1978 structures.

Adjourn

D. DeBevec moved to adjourn. B. Buermann seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.