

PROGRAM/PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2009

The meeting of the Policy/Project Review Committee was held at the Northwest Regional Planning Commission office. At 5:34 PM, N. Speer noted there was no quorum.

ATTENDANCE:

Commission: Baderstadt, Andrea ; Garrett, Harold ; Guernsey, Michael ; Howrigan, Patrick ; Kade, Barry ; Kittell, William ; Lambert, John ; Leach, Christopher ; Peirce, David ; Roberge, Richard ; Speer, Neal ; Steen, Colleen ; Charron, Claude ; Manning, Bob .

Staff: G. Brunswick.

1) Minutes. N. Speer asked for comments on the July meeting minutes. No comments. No action taken due to no quorum.

2) Staff updates. G. Brunswick gave a brief update on the Goodrich project. She attended the Act 250 public hearing where she submitted the Committee's comments. The hearing has been recessed and a decision will be issued shortly. She noted that there are no further updates on the Georgia Wind or Wagon Wheel projects.

M. Guernsey noted a recent newspaper article about the Georgia Wind Project.

3) Minor Projects.

- **Brownway Expansion, Enosburg Falls.** G. Brunswick provided a description of the proposed expansion at the Brownway Residential Care Home in Enosburg Falls. She explained that there does not appear to be any conflict with the Regional Plan or any specific issues for comment.
- **Sawmill, Fletcher.** G. Brunswick provided a description of the proposed sawmill in Fletcher. It has been in operation without a permit and is now seeking one. The project includes two buildings and an access road off Metcalf Pond Road. Brunswick explained that she does not see any conflict with the Regional Plan or any specific issues for comment.

The Committee did not have any comments on these two projects.

4) Major Projects.

- **Cassidy Meadow PUD.** Brunswick provided an explanation of the proposal for a 34 unit Planned Residential Development with a 1600' access road with shared on-site water, wastewater and stormwater control. The project is off the Gore Road in Highgate just north of the Ice Arena. It proposes to construct 11 2-bedroom carriage units for seniors, one duplex with 2-bedroom units, and 7 triplexes with 1 bedroom units. The project is located in Agricultural Resource Lands as identified in the Regional Plan and the project qualifies for substantial regional impact.

Brunswick noted that sidewalks are not included on the proposed road; however, there is a proposal for a cinder path along the Gore Road providing pedestrian connection from the project to the Ice Arena and Elementary School. The application notes that a 4-foot shoulder along the road will be marked for pedestrians. The Committee discussed whether this proposal adequately addressed pedestrian accessibility for the project. The Committee recommended that pedestrian accessibility within the development be dealt with further by incorporating additional pedestrian paths or sidewalks with separation from the road.

The Committee discussed impacts to primary agricultural soils. The project will impact a total of 9.40 acres of primary or statewide agricultural soils, out of a total of 24.66 acres. The project proposes 15 acres of on-site mitigation on the north side of the parcel. Additional off-site mitigation for 5.64 acres is required based on statutory mitigation ratios. There was some curiosity about what the actual use of the preserved agricultural mitigation land will be. There was some acknowledgement that the site does not contain the best agricultural land. There was general agreement that with the Agency's mitigation recommendation, there is no conflict with the Regional Plan regarding impacts to primary agricultural soils.

The Committee discussed the location of the project as being good. It is within walking distance of amenities in Highgate Center, the Elementary School, and the Ice Arena.

The Committee discussed housing affordability. The project is a good opportunity for senior housing. The applicant could work with a land trust or other housing organization to provide perpetual affordability.

Because of timing limits, Brunswick will prepare comments and testify at the Act 250 public hearing prior to having the comments approved by the Board. The Board will act on them at the August Board meeting.

- **Reed subdivision, Georgia.** Brunswick provided a description of an 11-lot subdivision in Georgia off Reynolds Road. The application is for the subdivision of a previously approved tract into 11 lots, with 8 single-family home lots (16.16 acres), one lot set aside as common land and agricultural mitigation (24.12 acres), one pre-existing agricultural mitigation lot (19.6 acres), and one lot retained by the applicant (31 acres).

The Committee discussed the layout of the agricultural mitigation lands and questioned if there are better-suited lands on the site. Access to the land does not seem ideal. There seems to be land under current agricultural use that would be better for agricultural preservation than the forestlands that are proposed.

The Committee agreed that other than a comment regarding the layout of agricultural mitigation lands, there is no conflict with the Regional Plan.

The meeting ended at 6:31