

PROGRAM/PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2009

The meeting of the Policy/Project Review Committee was held at the Northwest Regional Planning Commission office. At 5:31 PM, C. Steen opened the meeting.

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.** M. Guernsey asked for comments on the July and August meeting minutes.

M. Guernsey motioned to accept the August minutes. R. Roberge seconded. Motion passed.

D. Peirce motioned to accept the July minutes. H. Garrett seconded. Motion passed.

2) **Staff Updates.**

Georgia Wind: G. Brunswick gave a summary of the status of NRPC participation in the Georgia Mountain Community Wind project. She inadvertently missed the deadline for pre-filing testimony that would be considered in the proceeding. She may be able to participate on behalf of NRPC by submitting rebuttal testimony on issues already brought up. She noted that issues of concern to NRPC have been brought up and that she has an email into the Public Service Board to confirm whether submitting rebuttal testimony is allowed. M. Guernsey noted that NRPC comments will also be issued by other parties. D. Peirce noted that if NRPC cannot participate in rebuttal testimony, then it should collaborate with ANR and others on issues of concern. C. Leach noted that there is an issue with decommissioning. Brunswick confirmed that this has been brought up by other parties and that hopefully NRPC will be able to participate through rebuttal testimony. C. Steen summarized the committee's options. C. Leach discussed some of the issues with a wind farm proposal in Cape Cod and recommended a book called Cape Wind.

Georgia Quarry: Brunswick provided a summary of a Quarry expansion located in Georgia, which proposes to extend the existing stone and gravel extraction operation beyond the previously approved expiration date of 10/15/09 to 10/15/24 and to expand the previously approved limits of extraction. Brunswick worked with the Executive Committee to submit comments on the project due to time limitations. The comments included stormwater management, enforcing the creation of a conservation easement for previous deeryard impacts, and compliance with the reclamation plan. C. Steen noted she thought application was

incomplete. She also noted that compliance with existing permit conditions is an issue and that they are not effectively enforced. The Committee discussed this issue. Municipalities need to be aware of State permit conditions as the State is not enforcing them well. Municipalities do not have authority to enforce state permit conditions, but they can report to ANR. It was suggested that NRPC could make State permit conditions known to municipalities so they can keep tabs and report violations to Act 250 or ANR. The Committee discussed writing a letter to towns to make them aware of this issue and recommend that they do this. The Committee discussed the Act 250 process and whether towns defer to that process to address impacts. The discussion continued on issues of enforcement. Brunswick noted that she could discuss the issue with Georgia Town Administrator Carrie Johnson and then potentially send a follow up letter.

M. Guernsey motioned that G. Brunswick call the Town of Georgia and then follow up with a letter regarding the Act 250 conditions for the Rainville Quarry. D. Peirce seconds.

Discussion: C. Steen asked D. Peirce about whether he thinks this should be a policy. He recommended that we should see how this works with Georgia first. Motion passed.

3) Minor Projects.

Reconductoring of 4,000 feet of transmission line in St. Albans: Brunswick provided a quick summary of this project and the Committee agreed no action needs to be taken.

Silo Telecommunication Panels (2 in Swanton, 1 in Georgia, and 1 in Highgate): Brunswick provided a summary of 4 similar telecommunication panel projects to be located on existing silos. She noted that they are consistent with Regional Plan.

A. Baderstadt motioned to send letter of compliance with the Regional Plan. C. Leach seconded. Motion passed.

Aldis Hill Telecommunication Tower: Brunswick provided a summary of a new 150 foot telecommunication tower with 9 panel antennas on the Kidder property off Quarry Quart in St. Albans, which is Aldis Hill. She noted that the application stated that they looked into co-location with the existing cell tower on Aldis Hill but could not come to agreement on a contract. The Committee discussed this tower in relation to the existing tower, which is much taller. A. Baderstadt asked about the different types of panels. C. Leach explained that they have different frequencies. D. Peirce voiced his opinion that there is one ugly tower on the hill and that it should be maxed out before adding another. It is distressing that it is cheaper to build a new tower. He asserted that they should keep negotiating for co-location.

D. Peirce motioned to send letter of compliance with the Regional Plan, but with a comment that they all options and effort should be pursued for an agreeable co-location contract. M. Guernsey seconded. Motion approved.

Camp Ta-Kump-Ta: C. Steen introduced the proposal for a youth camp for kids with or recovering from cancer and their families. M. Guernsey explained that the camp plans to make use of an existing house with a commercial kitchen. The property has an existing Act 250 permit for weddings; however, they only had portalets for bathrooms. Due to this, ANR limited their use to one function a month, which wiped out the business. A portion of the property has since been sold to Camp Ta-Kump-Ta. The Camp has renovated the house to comply with ADA and installed a new septic system. The Committee discussed the camp and potential future plans. Brunswick ran through details of the Act 250 permit, which includes construction of 15 buildings to house activities, crafts, sleeping quarters, security, a chapel, and a pool/pond. She does not see any issues with the Regional Plan.

D. Peirce motioned to send letter of compliance with the Regional Plan with a recommendation to include low impact development. R. Roberge seconded. Motion passed.

Sand Pit: Brunswick gave a summary of the project. The application is for a permit amendment for an existing sand extraction pit off Frontage Road in Highgate. The property has recently changed ownership and the new owner intends to complete the necessary reclamation and continue the sand extraction. There will be one proposed equipment storage building at the roadside of the property. The applicant is also seeking approval to screen sand and topsoil at the site. The Committee discussed the proximity of abutting residences to the proposed site of the screening operation. H. Garrett noted that right now the site is a mess and an eye sore. If this project will clean it up, it is good. The Committee discussed the need to emphasize reclamation. The Committee discussed whether to send a letter to Highgate about keeping an eye on reclamation. M. Guernsey noted that it fits with the Regional Plan, but he has reservations with enforcement of reclamation.

M. Guernsey motioned to send letter of compliance with Regional Plan, with a comment to reinforce reclamation of existing and future extraction areas. D. Peirce seconds.

Discussion: The Committee discussed whether there would be wet or dry screening at the site. If it is a wet wash, siltation and runoff should be addressed. If it is dry, dust should be addressed. M. Guernsey agreed to amend motion.

Motion passed, with amendment.

Georgia Sand Pit: Brunswick updated the Committee on a request to extend the construction completion date on the Georgia Sand Pit project.

M. Guernsey motioned that there is no issue as long as reclamation is continued. P. Howrigan seconded. Motion passed.

4) Other Business.

C. Steen updated the Committee on an issue that came up at the Executive Committee meeting. It was regarding a comment from a District Commissioner on the timeliness of NRPC comments on Act 250 proceedings. M. Guernsey explained that District Commissioner Joe Flynn from South Hero asked him if it was possible for NRPC to submit comments to the Commission earlier. Guernsey brought this to the Executive Committee and wants to talk with Catherine and Greta about how to move forward and to respond to Joe. He explained that we have every right to submit comments at the hearing or up until the hearing. He doesn't like the fact that Joe Flynn indicated that they have their minds made up before hearings. It was suggested that applicants give us a longer lead-time, like 45 days instead of 30. This may not be realistic. Brunswick noted that she will make an effort to get comments in ahead of the hearing, but that sometimes it is not possible.

C. Leach motioned to adjourn at 6:59. R. Roberge seconded. Motion passed.