

PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, March 8, 2023

The meeting of the Project Review Committee was held remotely. Chair B. Buermann called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

ATTENDANCE:

Commission: Scholten, Marietta ; Demars, Howard ; Voegele, Albin ; Buermann, Robert ; Waite, Kirk

Staff: Emily Klofft.

Regional Commissioners: Bill Irwin

Guests: None.

Changes or Additions to the Agenda:

None.

Public Comment

None.

Minutes

A. Voegele motioned to approve the minutes of the February 2023 meeting. K. Waite seconded. The motion carried.

Project Reviews:

Act 250-Regency Housing , LLC

Project Details: Subdivision of existing lot to six lots and 5 single family dwellings located in Highgate, VT.

B. Buermann stated that the project was subject to Act 250 review even though it was under 10 units because of the underlying Act 250 permit associated with the previous gravel pit on the site. E. Klofft reviewed the project site plan and draft project review sheet. The project will be located on a reclaimed gravel pit, so impacts to natural resources will be limited. Loss of prime agricultural soils will be mitigated on-site by preserving other prime soils on the site. The 5 lots for development range from 1-3 acres, with each having separate water and wastewater systems. There is a possibility that a portion of the retained lot will be developed at a later date. The project has a local permit.

K. Waite asked if there was anything in the application to suggest the project would be of substantial regional impact. E. Klofft stated she did not have any specific concerns, but generally felt the project was large enough that staff review was not appropriate.

A. Voegele asked if the project addressed housing affordability. E. Klofft stated that the project application did not contain any information on whether or not the development would be affordable.

1 K. Waite motioned to find that the project is in conformance with the Regional Plan and does not constitute a
2 substantial regional impact. A. Voegelé seconded. The motion carried.

3 4 **Staff Reviews**

5 E. Klofft reviewed three projects under staff review.

6 7 **Section 248a: 45 Day Notice- Verizon Wireless/248a**

8 E. Klofft stated that this project was to install telecommunications equipment and associated infrastructure on
9 an existing farm silo in Montgomery. Generally, telecommunications project that install equipment on existing
10 structures do not have regional impact. The Committee generally agreed that the project did not have
11 substantial regional impact.

12 13 **Section 248: 45 Day Notice- Gary Smith- 17.6 kW**

14 E. Klofft stated this was a 45-day notice for a 17.6 kW ground-mounted system. Because the system is over 15
15 kW and ground-mounted, it must go through the full review process, however this project is close to a typical
16 residential scale project. The Committee generally agreed that the project did not have substantial regional
17 impact.

18 19 **Act 250- Jay Spaulding**

20 E. Klofft stated that this project was to add 2 housing units to an existing single-family home in Highgate. No
21 prime agriculture or natural resources impacts are expected. The Committee generally agreed that the project
22 did not have substantial regional impact.

23 24 **Review Definition of Substantial Regional Impact for 2023 Regional Plan Update**

25 E. Klofft stated that as part of the Regional Plan update process, staff was hoping to get the Project Review
26 Committee's input on the definition of substantial regional impact included in the plan. E. Klofft stated that
27 the only substantive change proposed so far was to increase the number of housing units for a project to be
28 considered of substantial regional impact and include sub-regional and transitional growth centers in that
29 chart.

30
31 K. Waite asked what the purpose of finding substantial regional impact in the case of a positive impact was. E.
32 Klofft stated one reason may be that projects which have a substantial regional impact, the vote of the
33 Committee is endorsed by the full board, which may lend additional weight. A. Voegelé stated some projects
34 may have both positive and negative regional impacts.

35
36 The Committee discussed the increase in housing units, which is associated with an increase in the number of
37 housing units considered for the priority project exemption under Act 250. B. Irwin asked staff to ensure this
38 change is publicized to the affected towns.

39
40 E. Klofft noted that the only type of project that is not specifically addressed under the current definition is
41 telecommunications towers, although other standards may also apply to them. B. Irwin stated that in some
42 ways telecommunications projects almost always have an impact on more than one municipality because the
43 service provided is only rarely contained to a single municipality. B. Buermann stated the standards for energy
44 projects and telecommunications projects might be similar. E. Klofft noted that one difference was that the
45 Regional Plan does not currently have mapping for telecommunications projects. B. Irwin stated that it was
46 likely that there would be more telecommunications projects in the future due to the goals of expanding
47 telecommunications. The Committee discussed adding a 7th criterion to the definition addressing
48 telecommunications projects that impact multiple municipalities. A. Voegelé stated this could also extend to

1 other types of projects that typically affect multiple municipalities such as the hospital, airport or technical
2 centers. The Committee asked staff to determine how best to incorporate this standard in the substantial
3 regional impact definition.
4

5 B. Buermann asked if the definition should include a piece on equity. K. Waite stated that equity was
6 important, but he felt it fit better as a goal of the plan rather than in the determination of substantial regional
7 impact. The Committee generally agreed that equity should be included in the goals of the plan as part of the
8 determination if the project conforms to the Regional Plan.
9

10 **Updates**

11 B. Buermann stated that DPS had provided its final opinion on the Enosburgh telecommunications tower
12 project, and that it seemed likely that it would be approved.
13

14 **Commissioner Announcements**

15 None.
16

17 **Adjourn**

18 *A. Voegele motioned to adjourn. K. Waite seconded. The motion carried. The Committee adjourned at 7:15 PM.*
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