

1 CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
2 PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE - MINUTES
3

4 DATE: Wednesday, March 8, 2017
5 TIME: 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
6 PLACE: CCRPC Offices, 110 West Canal Street, Suite 202, Winooski, VT
7

Members Present	Clare Rock, Richmond
Joss Besse, Bolton	David White, Burlington
Greg Duggan, Essex	Ken Belliveau, Williston
Jacob Hemmerick, Milton	
Andrew Strniste, Underhill	Staff
Paul Conner, South Burlington	Regina Mahony, Planning Program Manager
Dana Hanley, Essex	Charlie Baker, Executive Director
Alex Weinhagen, Hinesburg	Emily Nosse-Leirer, Planner
Everett Marshall, Huntington	Melanie Needle, Senior Planner
Dean Pierce, Shelburne (via phone)	Eleni Churchill, Transportation Program Manager
Sarah Hadd, Colchester	

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9
10 **1. Welcome and Introductions**

11 Joss Besse called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m. Regina Mahony passed around a list of 'sharing skill sets'
12 topic ideas to gauge interest.
13

14 **2. Approval of January 11, 2017 Minutes**

15
16 Everett Marshall made a motion, seconded by Paul Conner, to approve the January 11, 2017 minutes, with the
17 following amendments: Farrell St. was spelled incorrectly. Further discussion: Regina Mahony stated that
18 Clare Rock indicated via email following the last meeting that the development project at the creamery
19 building in Richmond was described incorrectly. What's currently being proposed on the Creamery site is one
20 building, footprint of 3,310 sq. ft. (4 floors: 2 floors commercial and 2 floor residential with 10 units). No
21 further discussion. MOTION PASSED.
22

23 **3. Population, Employment & Household Forecasts**

24 Melanie Needle indicated that we just received the revised forecast about an hour ago. The forecast that was
25 presented to the TAC this morning, is now updated with this revised forecast. Melanie Needle went over the
26 comments that we received on the last forecast, indicating that we received answers to most of the questions.
27 Though a few were still unclear including the jump in persons per household from 2040 to 2050. Melanie
28 Needle stated that we need the number of households for the model and not the household size, so we may not
29 need to worry about this if we can't get a clearer answer. Sarah Hadd asked that we at least get an answer on
30 why that is the case.
31

32 In response to Ken Belliveau's question about the employment history, Melanie Needle showed a slide from
33 the presentation to the CCRPC Board. The employment history is shown in a graph, in the same way the
34 population forecast history was shown.
35

36 Melanie Needle provided some highlights from the revised forecast, taken from the EPR memo:

- 37 • With these population and employment forecasts, Chittenden County is expected to be the leader in
38 Northwest Vermont and the State of Vermont in population and employment growth.
- 39 • Keep in mind: High confidence in the county forecasts, significant degree of error in the municipal
40 forecasts given the level of granularity although have taken into account the town perspective and
41 statistical reliability.
- 42 • Population

- 1 – The 2010 and 2015 population estimates correspond to the U.S. Census estimate and not the
2 adjusted estimates.
3 – Normalized population growth in Bolton, Charlotte, Colchester, Hinesburg, Jericho,
4 Richmond, St. George, and Underhill resulted in a decline, except Charlotte remained steady
5 – Burlington, South Burlington, Williston, Shelburne, Essex, and Milton received residual
6 population. This reallocation accounted for some of the scale issues that we faced in the initial
7 forecast, namely that Williston was increasing at levels that might have been unrealistic
8 especially when compared to other areas like Burlington and South Burlington
9 • Households
10 – Change in households in Burlington, to reconsider given the residential development plans
11 – Household levels remain fixed for most of the municipalities in the revised forecast but allow
12 the population living in households fluctuate
13 • Employment
14 – In the initial forecast, Essex’s share of employment was decreasing and not consistent with a
15 recently GBIC study we fixed the share of Essex’s employment at its 2015 level through 2050.
16 This resulted in an increase of nearly 13,000 jobs from 2015 through 2050 for Essex when
17 compared to the initial forecast.
18 – Bolton, Charlotte, Colchester, Milton, Richmond, St. George, Underhill, Westford, and
19 Williston decreased; Burlington, Colchester, Milton, South Burlington, and Williston
20 increased; Hinesburg, Huntington, Jericho, and Winooski, remained steady.
21

22 PAC questions/comments included:

- 23 • Joss Besse asked if home occupations are included in the employment. Melanie Needle stated that
24 total employment does include that.
25 • Ken Belliveau questioned the population numbers for Williston – the forecast indicates that they’ll
26 grow by 50% less people than we are growing now. Williston’s growth hasn’t seen a leveling off in
27 50 years, so a break in this long-term trend doesn’t feel quite right, but maybe it is right. The
28 differential in the five year just underscores the rest of the forecast. He expects more population
29 growth between 2015 and 2020 and further out.
30 • Robin explained there is also quite a bit of housing units that are in the pipeline in the Junction and
31 there is no indication that they aren’t going to get built.
32 • Paul Conner added that EPR switched to 2010 which is a more accurate population count than the
33 2015 estimate. Therefore, he feels this is more accurate than the previous methodology, and doesn’t
34 share Ken’s concern about the differences in the five-year intervals.
35 • Dana Hanley mentioned that sewer capacity is a constraint and they may not grow as forecasted, if
36 additional infrastructure doesn’t come to fruition.
37 • David White added that there is a whole host of things that could happen that could change things in
38 the future. There is little risk in not getting this exactly right as we will review it every five years.
39 • Clare Rock asked how this differs from the ACCD forecast. The second revision brought the
40 Chittenden County estimate much more in line with the ACCD forecast.
41

42 Alex Weinhagen made a motion, seconded by David White, to recommend that the CCRPC Board approve
43 this forecast. Further discussion included: Sarah Hadd stated that this is fairly conservative based on where
44 we’ve been and where we are going. In addition, the persons in households grow from 2040 to 2050 which
45 seems opposite of the trend we are likely to see. Sarah Hadd thinks it would be great to have an answer to this
46 question to understand why. Melanie Needle explained that it isn’t a product of the forecast; you derive the
47 household size rather than forecast it. Paul Conner added that unless we are trying to hit some mathematical
48 number in 2050, there is little logic to this. In looking further at the graph of persons in households, there was
49 more confusion on what the graph is actually saying. We will definitely need this clarified. Ken Belliveau
50 added that despite his specific thoughts on Williston, the forecast is much better than the original one.
51

1 Alex Weinhagen amended the motion, seconded by David White, to recommend that the CCRPC Board
2 approve this forecast, with a clarification on the number of persons in household. No further discussion. All
3 voted in favor, with the exception of Sarah Hadd. MOTION PASSED.
4

5 **4. Building Homes Together – Housing Data**

6 Emily Nosse-Leirer explained the housing affordability by municipality data that she prepared using sales
7 data, and median income per Town. The sales data was used rather than the assessor's data to get a sense of
8 what housing costs a buyer is up against; as opposed to the affordability of the entire stock. Comments from
9 the PAC included:

- 10 • Sales data could vary significantly from one year to the next. The data could also be skewed by very
11 expensive homes. It may be helpful to remove the outliers.
- 12 • The purpose of the CLA is to ensure that the sales values don't get too far from the assessed value (if
13 they do, you have to do another assessment). Though if the CLA is low the values will be off.
- 14 • PITI (principal interest tax insurance) are what should be included in homeownership costs, not
15 utilities. Utilities are included in rental costs.
- 16 • Should look at rental as well.
- 17 • The standard measure is the median value, because if most of the sales are for new construction, those
18 are almost always more expensive than existing housing stock.
- 19 • Clarifying the intent of the analysis would be helpful.
- 20 • Showing the actual sales prices could help because without that this data is a bit abstract.
- 21 • A similar analysis used the regional median income, rather than the municipal income because the
22 housing market is regional. Though it depends on whether your municipal income is anywhere close
23 to the regional income.
- 24 • Is everything fine in a town where the income is high and the prices are high? In Richmond everyone
25 who is there can afford it, but others who may come in can't afford it – that is the more interesting
26 analysis.
- 27 • Adding transportation cost might be helpful for a rural town.

28
29 Melanie Needle presented the number of household units built in 2016. We don't have data from all of the
30 municipalities and this has not been QA/QC'd yet; so far the data shows 771 constructed housing units in
31 2016. Essex and Colchester look a little low.
32

33 Regina Mahony added that Melanie Needle and Emily Nosse-Leirer have been conducting developer
34 interviews to get some information on whether housing units are lost in the process as we heard anecdotally
35 during the Building Homes Together campaign. We don't have any information to share yet, but we are
36 asking if they started the process at the maximum housing units allowed by zoning; if they lost or gained any
37 throughout the process and if so, why; and whether they took advantage of density bonuses. The PAC
38 suggested that we also ask some of the medium size developers as they might have a different experience than
39 the larger developers: Brad Gardner, Tom Sheppard, Larkin, Peter Kahn, David Shank (So.
40 Burlington/Milton). Cathedral Square may also be helpful, and the VT Developers Association listserv could
41 work also.
42

43 **5. Legislative Updates**

44 As the legislature is in full swing, we'll have a brief discussion on some relevant bills, such as: S.99 Measured
45 Expansion of TIF Districts, S.100 Housing Reform/Promotion and more generally water quality financing.
46

47 Regina Mahony quickly mentioned the following bills: S.99 Measured Expansion of TIF Districts; S.100
48 Housing Reform/Promotion; H.39 - An Act relating to the threshold for operational stormwater permits (this
49 bill proposes to lower the threshold for requiring an operational stormwater permit from one acre to one-half
50 acre of impervious surface); H.50 Telecom Facility Permitting Authority (the revised bill keeps telecom
51 facility review in the hands of the Public Service Board until July 1, 2020 instead of reverting to municipal

1 review authority this year); and H.457 - An Act relating to the creation of a tax increment financing district in
2 Shelburne.

3
4 Alex Weinhagen provided more specific detail on the following bills, and stated that the crossover date is
5 3/17th:

6 S.99 - Measured Expansion of TIF Districts - Would allow up to two new Tax Increment Finance (TIF)
7 districts per county over the next seven years with a variety of caveats and conditions. There are a variety of
8 TIF bills, and S. 99 seems like it has the most legs. Another bill that would allow for more districts doesn't
9 seem like it is going anywhere. David White has been advocating to take the cap off entirely. Haven't seen
10 any bills come close to that. S.99 might come the closest, but David will likely continue to testify to expand
11 beyond 2 new TIF districts/county.

12 S.100 - Housing Reform/Promotion - Would promote affordable and sustainable housing through bonding for
13 affordable housing development; through changes to State and municipal land use laws concerning affordable
14 and priority housing projects; through education and outreach to municipalities concerning municipal authority
15 on water and sewer connections; and through allowing captive insurance companies to participate in the tax
16 credit for affordable housing. This is a much larger housing bill – some pros and cons to this bill. Permit
17 Reform extravaganza, suite of permit reform bills. Changes definition of affordable housing to state median
18 income which doesn't make any sense.

19 H.209 is probably the most relevant to municipal planners based on local development review process. The
20 other bills are much more state based. On-the-record review by request. You'd have to do it even if you
21 aren't prepared. Require 90 day complete application; and 180 days to make a decision. Charlie Baker
22 explained that CCRPC prepared a 2014 permit reform policy statement that might help.

23 HNRC H.194 – ACCD priority housing projects would have an easier way through Act 250. Don't understand
24 the interplay between this and S.100. Probably more legs than S.100, and less problematic. Charlie Baker
25 indicated that he has been asked for testimony on this. Hoping this will likely not go anywhere, and instead
26 push H.424, which would commission a study of Act 250 and hopefully make more comprehensive
27 recommendations to meaningful/integrated permit reform. This bill deals with the issue of a cap on housing
28 units in designated centers, and having a previous permit kick in Act 250 review.

29 There was some discussion regarding Clean Water Financing. At the moment, the proposal is to not address
30 the long-term financing needs this session. The Governor has also stated that he is not in favor of new tax/fee
31 increases.

32
33 **6. Hinesburg Town Plan – Public Hearing and Review**
34 Joss Besse opened and closed the public hearing. Joss Besse asked Emily Nosse-Leirer to provide an
35 overview of CCRPC's Staff summary. Emily reviewed the Plan in November before it went to the Planning
36 Commission public hearing. One issue was reference to the Tactical Basin Plan. The PC also received other
37 comments, and had five subsequent meetings to address the concerns. The Plan has now been submitted to the
38 Selectboard and Emily conducted a final review. There are no issues, though Emily Nosse-Leirer did point out
39 the recommendation for Hinesburg to work with Starksboro in the future if the Hinesburg industrial area
40 moves forward to development.

41
42 Alex Weinhagen explained that this has been a multi-year effort and went on pretty long. He is happy to take
43 suggestions. PAC questions/comments include:

- 44 • Robin Pierce suggested that they switch CCTA to GMT.
- 45 • Robin Pierce questioned the smaller lot sizes in rural areas and whether that is compatible with
46 protection goals? Alex Weinhagen explained that they've disconnected density from the lot sizes (i.e.
47 fixed area based density) so the small lots can be strategically placed and therefore protect larger
48 unfragmented parcels.

- 1 • Robin Pierce suggested red spectrum lighting rather than blue spectrum to help eliminate interference
2 with the night sky.
- 3 • Robin Pierce suggested that transmission lines shouldn't be expanded; we should plan to move to
4 large batteries in industrial basements.
- 5 • Clare Rock asked if Hinesburg had any discussions about use of the word "encourage" in the
6 objectives. Alex Weinhalten stated that it was specifically used as an advisory word from the Town to
7 the Town. There was a lot of sensitivity particularly in the energy realm.
- 8 • Joss Besse asked if there has been any communication between Hinesburg and Starksboro on the
9 industrial area. Alex Weinhalten stated that there hasn't been so far.
- 10 • Ken Belliveau stated that he found the format to be a good user friendly format. Alex Weinhalten
11 gave the credit to Brattleboro as he used their format.
- 12 • Dean Pierce stated that the design of the Plan is great. He asked how they managed to take 4
13 community surveys over 5 years? Alex Weinhalten stated the surveys were web-based (survey
14 monkey); and he actually thinks they haven't done it enough. In public hearings we change what we
15 are doing based on the 25 people in the room, so his Chair really wanted to do more surveys to gain a
16 broader perspective. They hope to do similar surveying every one or two years to get a trend. 400
17 responses to first survey, 200 following, and 200-ish responses to the Lake Iroquois survey - not
18 statistically significant, but certainly much more than the 25 people who come to the meetings.
19

20 Paul Conner made a motion, seconded by Robin Pierce, that the PAC finds that the draft 2017
21 Hinesburg Town Plan, as submitted, meets all statutory requirements for CCRPC approval, and that
22 the municipality's planning process meets all statutory requirements for CCRPC confirmation. Upon
23 notification that the Plan has been adopted by the municipality, CCRPC staff will review the plan,
24 and any information relevant to the confirmation process, for changes. If staff determines that
25 changes are substantive, those changes will be forwarded to the PAC for review. Otherwise the PAC
26 recommends that the Plan, and the municipal planning process, should be forwarded to the CCRPC
27 Board for approval. No further discussion. MOTION CARRIED.
28

29 **7. Regional Act 250/Section 248 Projects in the Horizon**

- 30 • Colchester – minor amendments nothing work bringing up. Severance Corners potentially another 40
31 to 50 units.
- 32 • Essex – nothing
- 33 • Underhill – nothing
- 34 • Huntington – nothing
- 35 • Milton – race car outfitting facility in Catamount. Retrofit cars for Subaru. Trucking distribution
36 facility – 20 to 30,000 sq.ft. PSB – 38 acre solar array.
- 37 • Williston – assorted minor amendments.
- 38 • Hinesburg – nothing new
- 39 • Shelburne – nothing new
- 40 • Bolton – nothing new
- 41 • Essex Junction – hearing for the canopies at McGillicuddys.
- 42 • So. Burlington – dozen housing units on Swift St. 6 market street – 32-ish senior housing. Permit was
43 approved for fill at the airport. So. Burlington asked for a hearing because of truck traffic on City
44 roads associated with the fill. JAM Golf – long awaited settlement includes a land swap that needs to
45 go to Act 250 because both properties have an existing permit.
- 46 • Burlington – Farrell Cambrian Rise - 700+ units. Awaiting ANR permits before goes to Act 250.
47

48 **8. Other Business** –

- 49 a. Dean Pierce: Town/County Boundary Amendment for the CENSUS. CENSUS requests Town
50 boundary adjustments; and Shelburne's is inaccurate. He was talking with Pam Brangan about it and
51 they thought it would be helpful to see if there was any other interest at the PAC meeting. Williston

1 and Hinesburg think it is a good idea. The process will be easy until there is a dispute between two
2 towns. Joss Besse asked for a show of hands, and most of the PAC were only semi-interested at best.
3 Regina Mahony will circle back with Pam Brangan, but indicated that this won't be a priority for us if
4 it isn't for the municipalities.
5

6 **9. Adjourn**

7 The meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m.
8

9 Respectfully submitted, Regina Mahony