

CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
DRAFT

DATE: Wednesday, September 16, 2020

TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE: REMOTE ATTENDANCE VIA GO-TO-MEETING VIDEO

PRESENT:	Bolton:	Sharon Murray	Buel's Gore:	Garret Mott
	Burlington:	Andy Montroll	Charlotte:	Absent
	Colchester:	Jacki Murphy	Essex:	Jeff Carr
	Essex:	Elaine Haney, Alt.	Essex Junction:	Dan Kerin
	Hinesburg:	Michael Bissonette	Huntington:	Barbara Elliott
	Jericho:	Catherine McMains	Jericho:	Wayne Howe, Alt.
	Milton:	Tony Micklus	Richmond:	Bard Hill
	St. George:	Absent	Shelburne:	Absent
	So. Burlington:	Meaghan Emery, Alt.	Underhill:	Absent
	Westford:	Absent	Williston:	Erik Wells
	Winooski:	Michael O'Brien	Cons/Env.:	Don Meals
	VTrans:	Amy Bell	Bus/Ind:	Absent
	GMT :	Absent	Agriculture:	Absent

	Socio/Econ/Housing:	Absent		
Others:	Mark Hughes, Racial Justice Alliance		Meghan O'Rourke, CCTV	
Staff:	Charlie Baker, Executive Director		Regina Mahony, Planning Prgm Mgr.	
	Eleni Churchill, Trans. Prgm Mgr.		Melanie Needle, Senior Planner	
	Taylor Newton, Senior Planner		Bryan Davis, Senior Planner	
	Emma Vaughn, Communications Mgr.		Marshall Distel, Trans. Planner	
	Amy Irvin Witham, Business Office Mgr.			

1. Call to order; Roll Call Attendance; Changes to the Agenda.

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM by the Chair, Michael O'Brien. There were no changes to the agenda. Jeff Carr stated he was not representing Essex Town as the voting attendee and instead, Elaine Haney would be the Essex Town voting representative tonight.

2. Public Comment Period on Items NOT on the Agenda. There were none.

3. Action on Consent Agenda, MPO Business. There were minor amendments to the FY21-24 TIP. First, to advance funds in the amount of \$454,500 to Project BP150, King Street Rail Crossing Safety Improvements, Burlington for construction of rail crossing safety improvements. Second, the addition of \$258,750 in FY21 and \$776,250 in FY22 to Project HP154, Maple Street Rail Crossing Safety Improvements, Burlington for construction of rail crossing safety improvements. BARBARA ELLIOTT MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY DAN KERIN TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH ONE ABSTENTION FROM DON MEALS.

4. Approve Minutes of July 15, 2020 Board Meeting. BARBARA ELLIOTT MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY GARRET MOTT TO APPROVE THE JULY 15, 2020 BOARD MEETING MINUTES AS SUBMITTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH ONE ABSTENTION FROM MEAGHAN EMERY.

1 5. Racism is a Public Health Emergency Declaration, Mark Hughes, Racial Justice Alliance

2 Mike welcomed Mark Hughes, the Executive Director of Justice for All, and a member of the
3 Vermont Racial Justice Alliance. Charlie stated he and Mark have been engaged in weekly
4 conversations on racial and social justice topics and Burlington's declaration of Racism as a public
5 health emergency. Mark thanked Charlie and Mike for the welcome and provided a bit of personal
6 background information. Mark is a retired Army officer who has lived in Vermont for the past
7 eleven years, mostly in Washington County, and for the past few years in Burlington. Mark asked
8 everyone attending the meeting to introduce themselves and expressed his desire to hold an
9 interactive discussion.

10
11 Mark referred members to the Racial Justice Alliance Public Action Advisory document included with
12 the packet. Mark said it is important to understand differences between the regions of Vermont;
13 Burlington is very different from Williamstown, or Woodbury or Cabot, and Vermont communities
14 are very different everywhere you go. He explained what is happening socially and culturally in one
15 Vermont town is not necessarily the same as what is happening in a neighboring Vermont town.
16 Mark said when he began paying more attention to the racial and social justice issues and events
17 occurring around the world, he needed to find a way to make sense of things. He began doing
18 research on national best practice and standards and felt compelled to share the information he was
19 discovering. He began to reach out to community members and participated in conversations about
20 the racial and social inequities he found. From this outreach, he became a conduit for leaders and
21 community members.

22
23 Mark referred members to an excerpt from the Racial Justice Alliance Public Action Advisory
24 document included with the packet: *"The Vermont Attorney General and Human Rights Commission*
25 *Task Force on Act-54 Racial Disparities in State Systems Report and Recommendations, dated*
26 *December 2017 details findings on racial disparities across all systems in Vermont. Notable is the fact*
27 *that pre COVID-19, the median wealth of a Black family was 1/13th of that of a white family."* Mark
28 stated, there needs to be transparent and effective oversight of law enforcement, to ensure there is
29 adequate training and a task force that reports on the disparities. Once these disparities were
30 discovered, further inquiries into root causes began, which is essentially, systemic racism, as defined
31 in the Advisory document: *"Systemic racism includes the complex array of antiblack practices, the*
32 *unjustly gained political-economic power of whites, the continuing economic and other resource*
33 *inequalities along racial lines, and the white racist ideologies and attitudes created to maintain and*
34 *rationalize white privilege and power. Systemic here means that the core racist realities are*
35 *manifested in each of society's major parts [...] each major part of U.S. society--the economy,*
36 *politics, education, religion, the family--reflects the fundamental reality of systemic racism."* Mark
37 went on to explain, overt racism is intentional; however, systemic racism is complex and has
38 economic impacts that create policies that produce an adverse impact on black and brown people
39 and advances white people. Over time, there has been a consistent suppression of the political and
40 economic growth of black and brown people. To create real change, we must shift political and
41 economic power. When we are funding and administering community programs we need to ask, to
42 what extent does the program economically and politically help advance white people and to what
43 extent does it economically and politically hurt and oppress black people? Many policies are
44 intrinsically racist in nature. This is what we need to investigate.

45
46 Mark invited member questions and comments. Mike asked Mark to provide background on the
47 term "Black Lives Matter" and Mark responded with the following metaphor; if your home was on
48 fire and firefighters were present, but focusing all of the firefighting efforts of spraying water across

1 the entire neighborhood, eventually, they *may* arrive with a hose and put the fire out at your home.
2 Mark then went on to explain the term, Black Lives Matter, was started by three young ladies as a
3 social media message after the death of yet another young black man, Trayvon Martin. Mark asked,
4 why is it, in housing, education, employment, in every single front, there are racial disparities, where
5 black people are considered less, and why, if “Black Lives Matter” do all of the rules and regulations
6 in place set the stage for an environment where it seems Black lives actually don’t matter?
7

8 Elaine Haney thanked Mark for his passionate comments and recommended the book *The Color of*
9 *Law* to members. She feels this book directly relates to the work we are doing. Charlie agreed and
10 stated many staff members have read this and said the same. Bard Hill recommended the book
11 *Caste*.
12

13 Mike and Charlie thanked Mark for joining us. Before saying goodbye and excusing himself from the
14 meeting, Mark invited people to reach out to him with any questions and assigned a bit of
15 homework. He asked everyone to watch one podcast from the Seeing White series of Scene On
16 Radio from the following website: <https://www.sceneonradio.org/seeing-white/>
17

- 18 6. Building Homes Together Update. Melanie Needle provided members with a presentation on the
19 Building Homes Together campaign. She explained the campaign was initiated through a
20 collaboration of the CCRPC, Champlain Housing Trust, and Housing Vermont in 2016 to build more
21 homes in Chittenden County. Melanie said there is a housing shortage in Chittenden County and the
22 lack of a robust housing market causes housing inequities. Through the strategies of our ECOS Plan
23 we are working within our communities to achieve equity in housing. We are committed to
24 furthering our understanding of the significant historical role land use policies and transportation
25 investments have played in systemic racism and inequities. We want to ensure future zoning and
26 transportation investments encourage equity and provide opportunities for underserved and low-
27 income populations. Future goals include a total of 700 new affordable homes over the five-year
28 campaign. Charlie said this process advocated for the Affordable Housing Bond and in conjunction
29 with our work on racial justice, will bring better understanding of ways to move this initiative
30 forward.
31
- 32 7. Committee member appointments. Mike reviewed the FY21 Committee Appointments memo with
33 members. He noted we are in very good shape and there is only one open position on the Board
34 Development Committee. CHAIR MICHAEL O’BRIEN APPROVED THE APPOINTMENTS AS THERE
35 WERE NO OBJECTIONS FROM THE BOARD.
36
- 37 8. Town of Williston Determination of Energy Compliance
38 Taylor referred members to the Memo and documents included with their packet. He explained the
39 Town of Williston addressed a few changes to ensure they can provide a determine of energy
40 compliance. Eric Wells thanked Charlie and the CCRPC Staff for the assistance on the town plan. He
41 felt the process has been good overall. Garret Mott asked if Williston’s siting policies to meet
42 requirements for renewable energy were addressed. Taylor stated, yes, they were addressed.
43 Staff recommends that the CCRPC Board grant an affirmative determination of energy compliance to
44 the amended 2016-2024 Williston Comprehensive Plan. GARRET MOTT MADE A MOTION
45 SECONDED BY DAN KERIN TO APPROVE THE TOWN OF WILLISTON’S DETERMINATION OF ENERGY
46 COMPLAINE. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
47
48

- 1 9. Chair/Executive Director Report
- 2 a. CCRPC Budget and Operations
- 3 Charlie stated the FY21 State of Vermont budget does not currently appear to have any
- 4 significant negative impacts on our FY21 budget. Charlie explained our office continues to be
- 5 partially open, however, most staff continues to work from home. The few staff who are going
- 6 in each week are following the safety protocols we developed using the guidance and
- 7 recommendations from State of Vermont and CDC officials
- 8 b. Local Government Expense Reimbursement Program
- 9 Charlie explained the Local Government Expense Reimbursement Program for COVID-19 eligible
- 10 expenses passed the Legislature in June. We are currently assisting towns seeking
- 11 reimbursement for expenses incurred and our costs are being paid for by the State.
- 12 c. Clean Water Service Provider update
- 13 Charlie said the DEC is proposing the CCRPC will be the provider for the Direct to Lake Basin and
- 14 the back-up for all. The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission will serve as provider
- 15 for the Winooski Basin and the Northwest Regional Planning Commission will serve as provider
- 16 for the Lamoille Basin. The draft rules and rulemaking currently in process will need to be
- 17 reviewed. This will be a topic at the October Clean Water Advisory Committee meeting.
- 18 d. Community Rail Feasibility Grant application update
- 19 Charlie explained we submitted a grant application to the Economic Development
- 20 Administration (EDA) to determine the feasibility of a community rail system and examine if
- 21 there is a way to support it financially through transit-oriented development. We applied for a
- 22 total of \$300,000; of this, the EDA would fund \$150,000 and HULA would contribute 50% (the
- 23 other \$150,000) to the funding effort. Charlie said we do not yet know if we will receive the
- 24 award. We also applied for and received the CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development
- 25 Strategy) Grant award that includes Central Vermont, Addison and Rutland County regions.
- 26 e. Council/Trustees/Selectboard meetings
- 27 Charlie said we are currently in the process of scheduling annual reports to our municipalities.
- 28 The first annual report presentation was held last night in Williston. Charlie said he will follow
- 29 up and set appointments if he has not heard from your municipality yet.
- 30
- 31 10. Committee/Liaison Activities & Reports. Minutes for various meeting were included in the packet
- 32 (Executive Committee, TAC, PAC, Brownfields, and CWAC). There were no questions.
- 33
- 34 11. Future Agenda Topics. Charlie reminded members Vermont's Secretary of Transportation, Joe Flynn,
- 35 will be at our upcoming October Board meeting. Charlie said we will discuss FTA and Title VI
- 36 reporting and have an update on the I-89 Study.
- 37
- 38 12. Members' Items, Other business. There were none.
- 39
- 40 13. Adjournment. GARRET MOTT MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY DON MEALS TO ADJOURN THE
- 41 MEETING AT 7:58 PM.
- 42
- 43 Respectfully submitted,
- 44 Amy Irvin Witham