

1 CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
2 PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC) - MINUTES
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4 DATE: Wednesday, April 12, 2023
5 TIME: 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
6 PLACE: Virtual Meeting via Zoom with link as published on the agenda
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Members Present: Joss Besse, Bolton Charles Dillard, Burlington Larry Lewack, Charlotte Katherine Sonnicks, Essex Town Keith Osborne, Richmond Aaron DeNamur, Shelburne Melinda Scott, Williston Matt Boulanger, Williston	Staff: Eleni Churchill, Transportation Program Manager Ann Janda, Senior Energy Project Manager Melanie Needle, Senior Planner Taylor Newton, Planning Program Manager Darren Schibler, Senior Planner Guests: Dave Robers, VEIC, Managing Consultant Amanda Froeschle, VT Dept. of Health
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8 **1. Welcome and Introductions**

9 J. Besse called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.
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11 **2. Approval of January 11, 2023 Minutes**

12 Larry Lewack made a motion, seconded by Charles Dillard to approve the prior meeting's minutes. No further
13 discussion. DeNamur abstained. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.
14

15 **3. FY 24 UPWP Review**

16 T. Newton reviewed the new land use projects included in CCRPC's upcoming year Unified Planning Work Program
17 (UPWP). At J. Besse's question, T. Newton clarified that all requested projects will be funded. He highlighted that
18 there will be a significant amount of funding for brownfields site assessments. He also noted that the Housing
19 Navigators program will likely be removed since it was removed from the Legislature's housing bill (S.100). Some
20 rural assistance funds were allocated to CCRPC primarily for the Town of St. George. Williston will receive
21 assistance to implement housing-supportive bylaw amendments. A large project will be the Plan BTV New North
22 End corridor study. Milton & Essex Junction will be participating in the Northwest Vermont Transit Oriented
23 Development (TOD) project to assist with coding updates. Charlotte is leveraging its Bylaw Modernization Grant
24 into a larger project to review zoning regulations within its village areas.
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26 **4. Town of Milton Town Plan Amendment**

27 D. Schibler explained that the Town of Milton has recently amended its Town Plan to include new data on aging and
28 a new land use area designation (only the latter of which is relevant to its consistency with the regional plan).
29 CCRPC staff reviewed the proposed change to create a new East Milton Transition Subarea, which is a residential
30 zone on the northeast side of the town's downtown core. However, it does not have municipal sewer service (only
31 water) and residential densities will remain low (less than 1 dwelling per acre).
32

33 J. Besse asked for clarification as to why this change was being made. D. Schibler responded that Milton had
34 received zoning change requests for the properties and determined that they could support more housing than the
35 zoning currently allowed given the availability of municipal water and the general absence of development
36 constraints, though the amount of development possible was still fairly limited compared to the downtown core.
37 Therefore, the Planning Commission proposed the new East Milton subarea to allow for compact development at
38 appropriate densities, but to clarify that this is distinct from the more rural areas of town.
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40 No members of the PAC had any comments or concerns about the proposed amendment. T. Newton clarified that the
41 letter will be sent out tomorrow now that the PAC has had an opportunity to review.
42

43 **5. Electric Vehicles**

44 D. Roberts introduced himself and provided a presentation on upcoming state and federal funding opportunities for
45 electric vehicles (EVs), which can help reduce emissions and save money compared to fossil fuel vehicles. The state

1 is planning for a 100% shift to passenger vehicle electrification by 2035, which amounts to about 27,000 vehicles by
2 2025 and 126,000 by 2030. He reviewed ways for municipalities to promote electric vehicles and the different types
3 of charging equipment or electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE). At J. Besse's question, D. Roberts clarified that
4 "conventional" hybrid vehicles are not considered electric vehicles if they do not have a plug since they run solely on
5 fossil fuels.

6
7 Roberts reviewed several EV considerations for municipal bylaws, including defining EV-related items, streamlining
8 the permitting process for charging equipment. Public charging stations may require more clarification, and it is
9 recommended that these generally be allowed as an accessory use to primary parking lots unless included as a stand-
10 alone fueling station.

11
12 Roberts also discussed planning considerations for EV charging, noting that most charging happens at home and
13 should be considered when reviewing development proposals, especially for multifamily housing. Workplace and
14 public charging are also important but may not be necessary in every community. Strong leadership on EV charging
15 by municipalities can take the form of planning, obtaining grants, reviewing projects, etc.

16
17 Roberts reviewed the current commercial and residential Vermont Building Energy Code requirements for EV
18 charging, which will progressively require more EV charging over time. At M. Needle's question, Roberts clarified
19 that the definition of multi-family is not defined as only 10 units or more, but may include 2-unit dwellings. This will
20 close the gap between these and single-unit homes (only 1 unit). There are also more clarifications about whether the
21 residential or commercial code will apply in mixed-use buildings. Roberts noted that the affordable housing
22 community has expressed concern about the increased cost of complying with these regulations, even though they
23 support the idea of electrification and efficiency.

24
25 Roberts described the state's EV Charging Plan (required under the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure or NEVI
26 program) to establish charging infrastructure along the interstate and major state highway systems. Most of the
27 current NEVI and VW Diesel Settlement funds will be directed to the 15 areas identified in the plan to provide
28 charging coverage within 30 miles anywhere within the state, but once these are built out funding can be directed
29 elsewhere. This may include additional funding for the state's prior programs on fast charging and multi-unit
30 housing, including for public areas and workplaces. Roberts also noted that there is a new NEVI grant available with
31 a \$500,000 minimum to install more EV charging infrastructure for which the state may apply.

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33 At the municipal level, Roberts recommends focusing on school and municipal facilities for installation of EV
34 charging. He also recommends prioritizing multi-unit housing, areas of employment, areas with low-income or
35 racially diverse populations, high-traffic areas, and walkable areas. Drive Electric Vermont is available to help with
36 outreach and prioritizing investments. The state will be putting out a partner survey for those who are interested.

37
38 J. Besse asked if any convenience stores or gas stations are interested in being EV charging hosts, and whether EV
39 charging will be installed on the interstate rest areas. Roberts responded that there are some, including the
40 Maplefields in St. Albans and locations in Derby, Newport, and St. Johnsbury. For interstate rest areas, there is a
41 prohibition on commercial activity within rest areas, so charging could be installed but the state couldn't charge for
42 it. In addition, many rest areas do not have good access to three-phase power needed for fast charging. Finally, most
43 rest areas are built for one-way travel, so it would require twice the charging infrastructure.

44
45 T. Newton noted that CCRPC had considered applying for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
46 discretionary grant but decided not to since CCRPC doesn't have an EVSE installation plan. If municipalities are
47 interested in doing this work, CCRPC could support the creation of EVSE installation plans in next year's UPWP.

48 **6. Draft Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)**

49 E. Churchill invited the PAC to provide any additional feedback on the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), a
50 final draft of which was presented to the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Long Range Planning
51 Committee (LRPC) within the last week. Both committees recommended that the CCRPC board warn a public
52 hearing on the MTP for May 19th, but staff are eager to hear any additional comments. The PAC did not have any
53 comments or suggestions, but Churchill notes that they are welcome to e-mail any to her prior to the hearing.
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7. Vermont Buildings & General Services (BGS) Municipal Energy Resiliency Program (MERP) Grants

A. Janda provided an update on the rollout of the new MERP program, the main goal of which is to improve energy efficiency within municipal buildings. MERP is prioritizing funding for municipalities with high energy burden (which does not include any within Chittenden County). However, all communities are eligible for \$4,000 mini-grants available now, which can be used for audits of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards in municipal buildings. Also, Buildings and General Services (BGS) will soon open applications for energy efficiency assessments by registered contractors, which should be more widely available. Janda recommends obtaining an assessment, since these are necessary to ensure eligibility for the more competitive implementation grants.

8. VT Zoning Atlas

T. Newton described a local effort to emulate the National Zoning Atlas created by Desegregate Connecticut. A group of Ph.D. students at UVM and Middlebury College will be leading the effort for a Vermont Zoning Atlas, which will use Chittenden County as a pilot. CCRPC will be hosting a “zoning atlas boot camp” in June and the county’s atlas will be complete by the end of June. The atlas group will then continue working on the rest of the state over the summer. T. Newton asked if any municipal planners are interested in providing quality control and feedback to the intern group before it is published. There was interest from most municipalities who were in attendance.

9. Legislative Items

T. Newton and D. Schibler invited questions from the PAC about legislative items, either in person or in e-mail follow-ups. D. Schibler also referred members to the Vermont Planners Association (VPA) Legislative Reports.

10. Members Items Open Forum

There was no discussion on this item.

11. Other Business

a. West Central Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

The CEDS has been formally approved by all the regional partners in this effort. The partners will be working on setting up an Economic Development Authority over the summer and fall.

b. Northern Borders Regional Commission, Catalyst Program

T. Newton noted that this grant program is now open and the deadline is upcoming. Details here. If any members know of projects within their municipalities, please notify CCRPC staff, especially if CCRPC will be identified as the LDD.

c. Development Activity Reports

M. Needle reminded the PAC to submit these reports and thanked those who already had.

d. Updated Regional & Municipal Energy Data and Maps

M. Needle noted that as part of the ECOS Enhanced Energy Plan update, CCRPC is reviewing the list of locally identified constraints on development of renewable energy projects. Please send any local changes to staff as soon as possible. She also noted that data from the Vermont Public Service Department to inform enhanced energy plan targets has been further delayed until fall at the earliest.

e. FEMA Flood Map & Bylaw Updates

CCRPC has a contract with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources to audit municipal bylaws for compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program standards. CCRPC staff have completed most audits and found that all municipalities are in good shape with only minor changes needed – details will be shared in May. CCRPC staff will be available next fiscal year to provide assistance with bylaw updates to achieve compliance or reach higher standards.

f. Regional Act 250 / Section 248 Projects on the Horizon

PAC members should email Taylor and Darren any Act 250/Section 248 updates.

J. Besse adjourned the meeting at 3:38pm.

Respectfully submitted, Darren Schibler