

DRAFT

ADDISON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

Wednesday September 27, 2000

The Addison County Regional Planning Commission Executive Board's September 27th, 2000 meeting was held at the Regional Planning Commission offices in Middlebury with Harvey Smith presiding.

ROLL CALL:

Bristol Bill Sayre
Monkton Thea Gaudette
New Haven Harvey Smith
Whiting Ellen Kurrelmeyer

STAFF: _____
Adam Lougee

BUSINESS MEETING:

Harvey called the meeting to order at 7: 20 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Given that a quorum of people at the last meeting were not at the present meeting, the Executive Board decided to table the acceptance of the minutes until next meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Adam distributed the Treasurer's Report and noted the Commission was in good financial shape. Adam noted that the auditors are currently working on the FY 2000 numbers. He expects them to be completed sometime in October. **Thea moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Bill seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Adam introduced Jamie Stewart, the Executive Director of the Addison County Economic Development Corporation. Jamie made a presentation concerning the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that he is interested in pursuing in conjunction with the Regional Planning Commission and the Chamber of Commerce. Jamie explained he is interested in a Joint Committee to help satisfy the CEDS program requirements and promote economic development. Harvey expressed concern about whether the terms in the CEDS, like “sustainable” development are defined and if so, how. Jamie said they would use federal definitions. Jamie explained that what most of these funds are used for are business incubators. Jamie reminded the Executive Board that his organization had conducted a study showing a definite need for incubator space. Unfortunately, at that time Addison County did not qualify for the Economic Development Administration funding. The rules have changed. We can now look at both underemployment and at specific segments of a county for unemployment. Accordingly, if Addison County completes a CEDS Plan it will be able to pursue EDA funding for certain segments of the population. Jamie noted that funding is also available for developing the CEDS Plan. Rutland and White River are currently working on their plans. The Northeast Kingdom already has one.

Jamie noted that the Regional Partners would have to work together to make this happen. At this time he is asking only for continued discussion on how to approach the plan. Jamie would look for funding to structure the CEDS. Funding would benefit the RPC. Ultimately, Jamie sees the EDA funding and mission tied to that of the Workforce Investment Board and other programs.

Harvey asked how the CEDS would be funded in the long run. Jamie responded that EDA funds creation of the CEDS. The CEDS is the document to allow businesses to apply for grants to support it. Jamie noted that primarily economic development and the regional planning commission would fund the long term maintenance of the CEDS. It can't function without the Joint Partners. Harvey noted that the Chamber should also be involved. Adam stated that he believed that Jamie, Linda and he had discussed the CEDS at their last meeting.

Thea asked about the size of the committee. Jamie responded he did not know, but suggested that his board and our board could make that decision. He also suggested that it be large enough to be inclusive, but small enough so it would operate efficiently.

Bill expressed a concern about forming a new bureaucracy. He stated he wanted to be cautious about duplicating efforts, hidden strings, and other pitfalls. He expressed interest in looking at the Northeast Kingdom Plan that has been in place for some time. Ellen also expressed an interest in seeing things that the Northeast Kingdom had funded with these programs.

Jamie said he would get a List of NCIC projects and the Northeast Kingdom's plan. He also emphasized that he would not go forward without the support of the Joint Partners. Harvey also requested a list of other money available and the strings attached to those other monies. Bill requested information about any CEDS that had experienced problems.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

ACT 250: There will be a hearing on the Windmill application of Tom Hanlon on October 2, at 7:00 at the Middlebury Town Hall.

Natural Resources Committee: None.

Transportation Advisory Committee: The TAC elected John Emerson as its chair. It received a presentation from Dean Pierce on the Bike/Ped study. The TAC expressed concern that there was not enough time for public review of the final plan. **They asked Adam and Dean to work together to find funds to extend the time for the study to allow for more public comments.**

Additionally, the TAC also reviewed its bylaws. Adam requested that two of its members meet with representatives of the Executive Board to go through the TAC Bylaws and work to make the bodies work together and serve all the people of Addison County.

Harvey stated we must clearly understand the roles and responsibilities of the TAC, of the Transportation Committee of the Regional Planning Commission and how the two bodies interact. Bill and Thea will get together with representatives of the TAC to try to work out a structure where all can function as one unit. **Adam will work to schedule a meeting.**

Local Government Committee: Thea reported the Local Government Committee has a hearing October 5, 2000 to review the New Haven Town Plan.

OLD BUSINESS:

Follow-up Discussion of Committee Structure: Adam stated that he had put this on the agenda to follow-up on the committees created at the last full commission hearing. Thea noted that Jan Albers had replaced John Chamberlain as the delegate from Weybridge. She wondered if she would also be taking his committee assignment on the Local Government Committee. Adam responded that he had spoken with Ms. Albers at the full commission meeting and that she would be serving on that committee. Other than the discussion concerning the TAC recorded above, no one had any further comments or concerns.

Personnel: Adam reported that he had made offers to two people to fill the positions open. Garrett Dague has accepted the position as the Transportation Planner. He will start October 16th. His resume is available for any one to review. Garrett has 10 years of experience as an Engineer with the NY DOT. He has a masters in planning and has worked in regional planning for the last year in New York. Adam also noted that he had offered the Planner/Grant Writer position to a woman named Brandy Saxton. Brandy has a dual masters in public administration and in Landscape architecture. She has done some very interesting planning work in similarly sized communities in upstate New York. She also has excellent computer skills and very good references. **(I am pleased to report that Brandy has taken the job and started October 2, 2000. Welcome Brandy.)**

Other: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Telecommunications Planning Meeting w/ Fred Kenney of Senator Leahy's Office: Adam reported that he Jamie and Linda had scheduled a meeting regarding the telecommunications infrastructure in the county for Friday September 29, 2000 at 10:00am at the Middlebury Inn. The purpose of the meeting was to determine the current shape of the infrastructure in Addison County, the suppliers plans for the future, the users needs and whether we could somehow enhance or infrastructure with a telecommunications grant from the federal government. **(The meeting was well attended and I believe constituted a successful first planning meeting.)**

Transportation Consultant Projects: Adam reported that both the Bike /ped study and the Middlebury Multi-modal Center Study were moving along well. The bike ped study was the topic for the Full Commission Meeting and TAC meeting in September. (Please see the TAC report above.) He hired subcontractors from Lincoln to perform a culvert inventory for the month of September.

Town Plan Status Update/ Municipal Planning Grants. Adam stated that a lot of towns were currently working on the last stages of their plans. New Haven voted to pass its plan September 12th. As noted above, the Local Government Committee will be meeting on October 5th as part of the Confirmation process. Adam stated that unfortunately, that was the only Town that would go through the confirmation process in time for the Municipal Planning Grant Funding this fall. He noted that the Planning Commission's in Ferrisburgh, Bristol, Goshen and Orwell have approved plans and passed them to the Selectboard. Salisbury's Plan is complete and needs to be confirmed and that hopefully each would follow shortly.

Other: Adam noted that he had received a request for support for a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program for the Vermont Portion of the Champlain Basin. He explained that the program appeared to provide funding to purchase agricultural easements from farmers along rivers and lakes, thereby reducing runoff. Harvey commented that he had heard of this program. **He requested that Adam respond requesting more information about the program. In particular, he felt it appropriate to ask the Department of Agriculture whether farmers would lose wetlands exemptions if land is enrolled in the program. He also, asked that they provide a comparison of this program to other programs. Lastly, he asked whether this will have any impact on forest lands.**

Adam notified the Executive Board that 6 farms in the county had applied to the Vermont Land Trust for conservation easements and that the Commission had been asked for letters of support. He noted that we have always supported these applications in the past and that the Regional Plan contained clear language in support of conserving the farmlands. Adam only brought it up at this time because of the large number of farms and acreage involved. Both Bill and Harvey expressed their support for the long-term preservation of agriculture in the county. However, each expressed reservations regarding the sale of easements in perpetuity. **Harvey requested that Adam secure copies of the first easement form ever used by VLT, copies of the current forms and copies of the current forestry forms.**

MEMBERS' CONCERNS/INFORMATION: None.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Thea moved to adjourn the meeting. Ellen seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.
Submitted by: Adam G. Lougee

