

Addison County Regional Planning Commission

Full Commission Meeting

Wednesday, January 14, 2006

The Addison County Regional Planning Commission's full commission meeting was held on January 11, 2006, at the Middlebury Inn's Founder's Room, with Donald Shall presiding.

ROLL CALL:

<i>Addison:</i>	David Cole	<i>Orwell:</i>	Andrea Ochs
<i>Bridport:</i>	Andrew Manning Edward Payne	<i>Panton:</i>	Michael Hermann
<i>Bristol:</i>	Peter Grant Jim Peabody William Sayre	<i>Ripton:</i>	Jeremy Grip
<i>Cornwall:</i>	Donald Shall Harvey Huetter	<i>Salisbury:</i>	
<i>Ferrisburgh:</i>	Bob McNary Stephen Gutowski	<i>Shoreham:</i>	Jeremiah Parker Elizabeth Pidgeon
<i>Goshen:</i>	Bruce Webster	<i>Starksboro:</i>	Elissa Close
<i>Leicester:</i>	Kathleen Ramsay Tom Drew	<i>Vergennes:</i>	
<i>Lincoln:</i>	Jason Oleet Steve Revell	<i>Waltham:</i>	
<i>Middlebury:</i>	Fred Dunnington Karl Neuse Brian Bauer	<i>Weybridge:</i>	Jan Albers
<i>Monkton:</i>	Thea Gaudette Charles Huizenga	<i>Whiting:</i>	Ellen Kurrelmeyer
<i>New Haven:</i>	Harvey Smith		

CITIZEN INTEREST REPRESENTATIVES:

AC Chamber of Commerce:

AC Economic Development Corp:

AC Community Action Group:

Otter Creek Audubon Society: Marcia Parker

ADDISON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

ACRPC EXECUTIVE BOARD

CHAIR: Donald Shall

VICE-CHAIR: Renny Perry

SECRETARY: Andrea Ochs

TREASURER: Karl Neuse
Andrew Manning
Elissa Close
William Sayre

STAFF:

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Adam Lougee

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/GIS DATA MANAGER: Kevin Behm

EMERGENCY MGT PLANNER/SENIOR PLANNER: Tim Bouton

SENIOR/TRANSPORTATION PLANNER: Richard Kehne

PLANNER/GRANT WRITER:

WATERSHED PLANNER: Neil Fraser

OFFICE MANAGER/BOOKKEEPER: Pauline Cousino

TELEPHONE: 388-3141

FAX: 388-0038

Public Program

Middlebury Town Planner Fred Dunnington presented an overview of the town's future infrastructure, with particular focus on the proposed Cross Street Bridge in downtown Middlebury. Fred's presentation included a brief chronological account of the Town's ongoing bridge dilemma, as well as the process by which the current Bridge Committee reached its conclusion in selecting the Cross Street Bridge option.

Fred explained that the State intends to upgrade the two downtown railroad bridges to accommodate double-decker train cars, which further maximizes the need for a second in-town bridge. In addition, the Battell Bridge has recently shown signs of disrepair, and the Pulp Mill Bridge, which is also in need of major repair, has fundamental flaws that prohibit adequate access. After considering seven alternative bridge options, the Bridge Committee determined that the Cross Street Bridge option is the only route to sufficiently provide traffic mitigation for the needed downtown bridge work at the least cost. Based on projected traffic conditions, both signalization and roundabouts were studied for the intersections associated with the Cross Street Bridge, and it was determined that a roundabout would be a more effective and aesthetically pleasing option.

Fred noted that the Town of Middlebury has the bonding capacity for the bridge project, provided a commitment of support is demonstrated by the State. It is imperative that the Agency of Transportation assign a project number to the bridge proposal in order for legislators to consider allocating state monies for the project. While Middlebury officials work diligently toward that end, the Town continues to explore creative financing strategies, including a design-build approach in which J.P. Carrara & Sons would construct a pre-cast quick bridge. Another option is to define the bridge as a local project, fashioned as a public/private partnership whereby the Town would build the bridge and the State would then lease it back to the Town, a relatively common practice with a number of state-owned buildings.

On behalf of the Town of Middlebury, Fred encouraged comments and suggestions from a number of groups, such as the Lions Club, Rotary, as well as regional planning commission members.

Ed Payne asked if a local option tax had been considered.

Fred advised that a number of options had been considered, and he personally advocated a gas tax to pay for the true cost of driving.

Marcia Parker asked what measures were being taken to alleviate traffic congestion in the meantime. Were large employers such as Porter Hospital staggering quitting times? Were shuttle buses being fully utilized? Is there a park & ride in place? Marcia recalled a traffic officer at the corner of Main and Merchants Row some years ago, and asked why that practice had stopped.

Fred explained that shuttle buses experience the same traffic congestion, and although ACTR's ridership continues to increase, only a small part of the problem is solved by public transit.

Harvey Huetter suggested that the Town of Middlebury may be relying too heavily on traffic engineers, and pointed out that what is now in place was once designed by engineers, who most likely reside elsewhere. Harvey stressed the importance of local input in terms of location and design of a second in-town bridge.

Fred advised that any and all ideas submitted by members of the community have been conveyed to traffic engineers for study and consideration. Fred conceded that the proposal is not a perfect solution, and that the Bridge Committee continues to welcome feasible, realistic ideas for further consideration.

Business Meeting

Noting a quorum of 29 delegates representing 18 towns, Chairman Don Shall called the Business Meeting to order at 8:45 p.m.

I. Approval of Minutes: December 14, 2005

Harvey Huetter moved to approve the meeting minutes for December 14, 2005; Peter Grant seconded the motion.

Andrea Ochs noted a correction on Page 3: Secretary "Dorn".

Minutes approved as amended by unanimous voice vote.

II. Treasurer's Report

Adam distributed an updated Treasurer's report (copy attached) and noted that Accounts Receivable are at 60%, and Accounts Payable are at 46%.

Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report passed unanimously by voice vote.

III. Committee Reports

Local Government

No meeting held.

Natural Resources Committee

No meeting held.

Act 250 and 248

Fred Dunnington reported that Lincoln Applied Geology filed an application for a four-lot subdivision on behalf of Peter Wendland, located off Boro Hill Road in Monkton. William Shaffer filed an application to expand his business on Route 7 in New Haven, to include a mini-golf facility. On November 15th, the Commission received the application of Eastview at Middlebury, Inc., Porter Hospital and Middlebury College for a proposed retirement community on a 30-acre parcel next to the Porter Hospital on South Street in Middlebury. Lathrop Limited Partnership submitted an application for a partial review of a proposed gravel pit on River Street in Bristol. On December 9th, the Commission granted a permit for the Lindale Mobile Home Park on property owned by Jeffrey and Joan Forbes to rescind the conditions of the previous permit. In addition, VELCO has received its Certificate of Public Good, and has begun construction of the 345 kV line and New Haven substation. The Trickett v. Ochs appeal is pending in the Vermont Supreme Court, and Tony Stout filed a letter on behalf of the Foote application noting that outstanding matters in the recess order have been completed.

TAC Transportation Committee

The Transportation Committee is scheduled to meet Wednesday, January 18th.

Bylaws Committee

Thea Gaudette reported that the Bylaws Committee has finished its work and will submit recommendations to the full commission meeting in February, following an editorial review

IV. Joint Partners Report

None.

V. Delegates/Staff Recognition:

Adam advised that final interviews for a new staff member in the ACRPC office are under way, and he anticipates making an offer to the selected candidate by the end of the week.

VI. Old Business

VELCO Summary

See Act 250 and 248 under "Committee Reports."

VII. New Business

None.

VIII. Member's Concerns/Information

Jan Albers moved that the commission offer a resolution of support for the proposed Cross Street Bridge in Middlebury; Andrea Ochs seconded the motion.

Elizabeth Pidgeon noted it should be clear that a vote in support of the resolution is one of conceptual support only. Bob McNary pointed out that surrounding towns may not be as affected by the proposed bridge as Middlebury, but may want to have more input. Harvey Huetter advised that Cornwall residents are presently considering transportation alternatives, and would therefore abstain.

Fred Dunnington offered that delegates first consult with constituents before voting on the resolution if that would make them more comfortable.

Peter Grant suggested that the motion be amended to include establishment of a regional bridge committee.

Ed Payne suggested that the commission offer its support to the Town of Middlebury just as it did to the Town of New Haven in its appeal to the Public Service Board regarding VELCO.

Andrea Ochs called for a point of order, and noted that the intent of the pending motion is to conceptually endorse the proposed Cross Street Bridge in Middlebury. Andrea added, that because the bridge would provide regional benefits, member towns should demonstrate their support.

Resolution of support for the proposed Cross Street Bridge in Middlebury passed by voice vote 26 in favor; 1 opposed, and 1 abstained.

IX. Adjournment

Andrea Ochs moved to adjourn; Thea Gaudette seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

*Submitted by,
Peggy Connor*