

Addison County Regional Planning Commission

Full Commission Meeting

Wednesday, October 11, 2006

The Addison County Regional Planning Commission met at the Middlebury College Kirk Alumni Center on October 11, 2006, Fred Dunnington presiding.

ROLL CALL:

<i>Addison:</i>		<i>Orwell:</i>	Andrea Ochs David King
<i>Bridport:</i>	Andrew Manning Edward Payne	<i>Panton:</i>	Michael Hermann
<i>Bristol:</i>	Jim Peabody Peter Grant	<i>Ripton:</i>	Judy Kowalczyk
<i>Cornwall:</i>	Donald Shall Annie Wilson Laurel Kritkauskay	<i>Salisbury:</i>	
<i>Ferrisburgh:</i>	Larry Keyes Bob McNary	<i>Shoreham:</i>	Elizabeth Pidgeon Jeremiah Parker
<i>Goshen:</i>		<i>Starksboro:</i>	
<i>Leicester:</i>	Kathleen Ramsay	<i>Vergennes:</i>	Renny Perry
<i>Lincoln:</i>	Steve Revell Jason Oleet	<i>Waltham:</i>	
<i>Middlebury:</i>	Fred Dunnington Brian Bauer Charlotte Rettinger	<i>Weybridge:</i>	Jan Albers
<i>Monkton:</i>	Thea Gaudette Charles Huizenga	<i>Whiting:</i>	Ellen Kurrelmeyer Jonathan Heppell
<i>New Haven:</i>	Harvey Smith		

CITIZEN INTEREST REPRESENTATIVES:

Addison County Farm Bureau: Kent Wright
Addison County Economic Development Corp.: Don Burns
Otter Creek Audubon Society:

ADDISON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

ACRPC EXECUTIVE BOARD

CHAIR: Fred Dunnington
VICE-CHAIR: Elissa Close
SECRETARY: Andrew Manning
TREASURER: Andrea Ochs
Renny Perry
Thea Gaudette
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: Jeffrey Owen
WATERSHED PLANNER: Amy Diller
OFFICE MANAGER/BOOKKEEPER: Pauline Cousino
TELEPHONE: 388-3141 **FAX:** 388-0038

Public Program

Chairman Fred Dunnington opened the meeting at 7:40 p.m. with the introduction of guest panelists Netaka White, executive director for the Vermont Biofuels Association; and Jock Gill of the Grass Energy Collaborative, a new organization committed to developing grass energy as a renewable biofuel. In Anders Holm's absence, due to a family emergency, Fred Dunnington offered a presentation on the hydroelectric project Dr. Holm has proposed for the Middlebury Falls.

Netaka White explained that Vermont Biofuels Association (VBA) was formed as a non-profit group whose mission is to build demand and capacity for locally produced biodiesel and other agriculturally derived fuels, and to serve as a resource for the development of a sustainable biofuels sector in Vermont. Biodiesel, being a renewable, vegetable-based fuel, also blends easily with petroleum and is compatible with all diesel engines and equipment, including furnaces and boilers that run on No. 2 oil. Blends of biodiesel are based on the percentage of biodiesel in relation to diesel fuel. B20 is 20% biodiesel; B100 is straight biodiesel used in summer months. When compared with straight petrol, these blends have less harmful impacts on human health and significantly reduce greenhouse gas and particulate emissions. While it may increase oxides of nitrogen slightly, biodiesel is the only liquid fuel commercially available that has the distinction of providing more than 200% more energy than it requires to produce it. And since the feedstocks to produce biodiesel are currently grown on Vermont's farms, the combined benefits of biodiesel are moving Vermont toward greater energy and fuel security, increasing local economic opportunities, and making for a cleaner environment.

Netaka also described Addison County Relocalization Network's (ACoRN) efforts to make the county more self-sufficient for food and energy. ACoRN is a cooperative response to an energy-constrained future. Its mission is to revitalize our local economy to help our community provide sustainable food, water, energy, employment, and other essential resources, and to promote conservation and a healthy environment. The Addison County Relocalization Network supports efforts such as Idle-Free Vermont, a non-profit, grassroots campaign formed to address the issue of vehicle idling in the State. ACoRN holds monthly meetings at the Ilsley Library and invites those interested in joining their efforts to email co-founder Greg Pahl (gpahl@sover.net).

Jock Gill is president of Grass Energy Collaborative, Inc., in Peacham, Vermont, a new organization committed to developing grass energy as a renewable biofuel. The most common use for grass energy crops will be as palletized fuel for burning in light industrial appliances and pellet furnaces. Grass can be converted to energy in several ways as market conditions demand: pelletized and combusted to produce for heat on a commercial scale; biodigested and combusted to produce electricity or combined heat/power; biodigested to produce methane gas, electricity, or liquid methanol; processed to create ethanol. With waste wood products such as sawdust experiencing demand, supplies are currently tight. Grass is an energy feedstock that can potentially be produced in reliable quantities with greater price stability. It's a relatively easy, inexpensive, and low-risk perennial crop, and for energy use can be readily combined with other biomass materials such as corn or waste paper. Since most varieties can be planted, harvested, and stored using implements that farmers usually have on hand, it requires minimal investment in new equipment. Grass crops could offer farmers an opportunity to diversify revenue sources while helping protect the natural environment. Each new crop absorbs as much carbon from the atmosphere as the burning of the last crop produced, making its use as fuel virtually carbon neutral. Consideration of grass as an alternative fuel is relatively recent in the U.S., so more research needs to be done to determine yields, energy gain, and cash value.

At the Middlebury Select Board meeting held October 10th, Dr. Anders Holm presented a proposal to re-establish power production from the Middlebury falls. Fred Dunnington has worked with Dr. Holm investigating the possibility of a micro-hydro electric generation turbine, using the old flume that runs under his property, the Rogers Block, including spaces rented to Main Street Stationery, apartments and offices, and a lower level, "Great Falls Art Gallery." The Town holds deeded rights to water power generation as well as title to the real property known as the Jessica Swift Park," the wooded area to the north and west of the old flume. The Holms intend to stabilize their building, and rehabilitation of the old flume could be undertaken at the same time for the new micro hydro project. What Dr. Holm envisions is a micro-hydro powerhouse located just upstream and under the south segment of the pedestrian bridge, involving a pipe encased in concrete conveying water from the old flume. A highly efficient turbine and generator set, maintaining river flow over the falls of 314 cubic feet per second, would produce 2,310-megawatt hours per year, with the potential to power approximately 400 homes. Dr. Holm concluded that the purpose of the plan is for the Town to make its own energy. The Vermont Department of Public Service is interested

in supporting community-based small hydro projects, and has extended the opportunity to apply for a \$20,000 grant to further investigate the feasibility of the project. Fred noted that the Middlebury Select Board has extended their conceptual support for the plan.

Michael Herman asked if a cost-benefit analysis had been conducted in terms of palletized grass energy versus fuel oil.

Jock explained pelletization is required to burn grass at meaningful volumes, and this processing is not yet readily available, nor is there a marketing system in place for sale to end-users. However, development of pelletized biomass fuels and technologies is accelerating, and he estimated that biofuel could be sold as low as \$2.10/gallon.

Bob McNary asked the estimated cost of the hydroelectric project proposed by Anders Holm.

Fred responded that it's at least a two million-dollar project, but stressed that there are a host of details to be discussed and developed. Very rough estimates have been provided by the hydro engineers of project cost, future wholesale electric price forecasts, etc., which indicate the payback period is in the realm of financial feasibility.

Judy Kowalczyk noted that members of ACoRN are available to answer citizens' questions regarding potential solar sites, and encourage delegates and the public to participate in the relocation project.

Harvey Smith reminded delegates of the upcoming Energy Conference scheduled for November 19th at the Windham Hotel in Burlington, featuring workshops and seminars.

Adam distributed a copy of Vermont Statutes Title 245, Section 1131, Chapter 33, outlining duties for Energy Coordinator, a position commonly held by town clerks. Jock Gill pointed out that by statute, an opportunity exists for town buildings to be heated by less than 30 acres of land with 75% of the cost funded by grants; hence the importance of an Energy Coordinator.

The public program concluded at 8:45 p.m.

Business Meeting

The Business Meeting commenced at 8:45 p.m.

I. Approval of Minutes: September 13, 2006

Andrea Ochs moved to approve the meeting minutes for September 13, 2006; Thea Gaudette seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote. Minutes approved as presented.

II. Executive Board Minutes: September 27, 2006

Executive Board minutes unavailable. Action deferred.

III. Treasurer's Report

Adam distributed an updated Treasurer's Report (copy attached).

Don Shall moved to accept the Treasurer's Report; Bob McNary seconded the motion. Treasurer's Report approved unanimously by voice vote.

IV. Committee Reports

TAC Transportation Committee

Andrew Manning reported that Transportation Planner Rick Kehne recently attended a meeting in New York State on the deteriorating condition of the Crown Point Bridge, and whether to replace or renovate the bridge. TAC members also discussed prioritizing ongoing paving projects in and around Middlebury, including Routes 125, 30 and 7, as well as the downtown railroad bridges scheduled to be reconstructed within the next 2-3 years.

Brian Bauer pointed out that, unless paving is coordinated next summer, downtown merchants are likely to be negatively impacted to the point of losing their businesses. Fred Dunnington noted that a contingency of Middlebury business owners attended the Middlebury Select Board meeting October 10th, raising their concerns, and hope to establish a committee advocating on their behalf during next summer's construction season.

Thea Gaudette reported that TAC has hired RSG as consultants, and will hold an introductory meeting.

Jim Peabody suggested that the issue of the Crown Point Bridge be a topic for the Public Program at an upcoming Commission meeting.

Act 250 and 248

The Eastview Project in Middlebury received Act 250 approval on October 10th.

Local Government

None.

Natural Resources Committee

None.

V. Joint Partners Report

None.

VI. Delegate/Staff Recognition

Amy Diller, a native of Maine, and UVM graduate, was introduced as ACRPC's new Watershed Planner. Amy will also be working with Adam on the Brownfields Program.

Addison County Economic Development Corporation representative Don Burns invited delegates to OMYA's open house this Saturday, October 14th, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Middlebury Quarry on Foote Street.

VII. Old Business

Committee Membership for FY06-07

Committee assignments were previously mailed to delegates in their packets. Andrea noted that the Natural Resources Committee will hold its first meeting November 9th at 6 p.m. prior to the commission meeting. Laurel suggested that the Act 250 Committee hold an orientation meeting to familiarize new members with the committee's goals and purpose.

Proposed Training Schedule

Adam cited three training sessions to be held this year, with dates to be announced: 1) Chapter 117 Implementation; 2) Planning for Affordable Housing, Villages, PUV's; 3) New Board Members' Training - after Town Meeting Day.

Other

The Vermont Land Use Education and Training Collaborative will offer a Municipal Officers Management Seminar, which will include a workshop on Ancient Roads, at the Rutland Holiday Inn October 24th. Interested participants may register on line at www.regonline.com/moms06.

VIII. New Business

Emergency Management: Continuity of Government Planning

Over the summer months, Kevin and Tim have worked with the Department of Health "pandemic planning." Ten towns have participated in the program designed to establish efficient communication during a state of emergency. A meeting and light dinner is planned at the new police barracks in New Haven on October 16th.

Emergency Management: Critical Facilities Planning

Kevin explained that year one of the two-year program has focused on a collaborative database developing identifying critical facilities, an effort undertaken by regional planning commission statewide. Adam added that Select Boards across the state have appointed emergency managers to serve as central contacts in the chain of command during emergencies as part of Homeland Security measures.

IX. Members' Concerns/Information

Noting the level of interest in alternative energy, Bob McNary recommended that the commission establish an Alternative Energy Committee to serve the towns of Addison County. Harvey Smith strongly agreed, and offered to work with members on alternative energy initiatives.

X. Adjournment

Andrea Ochs moved to adjourn; Peter Grant seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Submitted by,
Peggy Connor