

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Addison County Regional Planning Commission**  
**Wednesday, November 12, 2008**

*The ACRPC November meeting was held at ACRPC's office on November 12, 2008 with Fred Dunnington, Chair, presiding.*

---

**ROLL CALL:**

*Addison:*

*Bridport:* Andrew Manning  
Ed Payne  
Mike Gamache

*Bristol:* Jim Peabody  
Peter Grant

*Cornwall:* Mary Dodge  
Ralph Teitscheid

*Ferrisburgh:* Bob McNary  
Larry Keyes

*Goshen:* Bruce Webster

*Leicester:*

*Lincoln:*

*Middlebury:* Brian Bauer  
Fred Dunnington

*Monkton:* Thea Gaudette  
Charles Huizenga

*New Haven:* Harvey Smith  
Milo Schaefer

*Orwell:*

*Panton:* Michael Hermann  
James Durragh

*Ripton:* Ted Dunakin

*Salisbury:*

*Shoreham:*

*Starksboro:*

*Waltham:*

*Weybridge:*

*Whiting:* Ellen Kurrelmeyer  
Jonathan Heppell

*Vergennes:*

**CITIZEN INTEREST REPRESENTATIVES:**

*Addison County Farm Bureau:*

Kent Wright

*Addison County Economic Development Corp:*

*Otter Creek Audubon Society:*

*Otter Creek Natural Resources:*

*Addison County Chamber of Commerce:*

**ACRPC EXECUTIVE BOARD**

*Chair:* Fred Dunnington

*Vice-Chair:* Bob McNary

*Secretary:* William Sayre

*Treasurer:* Thea Gaudette

*At Large:* Jeremy Grip

Bruce Webster

Ellen Kurrelmeyer

**STAFF**

*Executive Director:* Adam Lougee

*Assistant Director/GIS Manager:* Kevin Behm

*Senior/Emergency Mgmt. Planner:* Tim Bouton

*Senior/Transportation Planner:* Richard Kehne

*Environmental/Land Use Planner:* Elizabeth Golden

*Office Manager/Bookkeeper:* Pauline Cousino

Program: CVPS Proposed Middlebury Improvement Project

Fred Dunnington introduced Greg White, an engineer with CVPS. He introduced the proposed electrical project, which is designed to improve reliability in Middlebury by providing redundancy to the existing radial line by creating a new 46 kv transmission line from Weybridge to the VELCO New Haven substation. The line would provide additional voltage lines to the towns of Weybridge, Middlebury and New Haven. Before building anything, the project would need to be reviewed under Title 30, Section 248, by the public service board. In the review process, CVPS will be required to demonstrate the need, cost effectiveness, reliability, and environmental implications of the project. The project comes under Section 248 review, and thus CVPS is obligated to give notice to the Regional Planning Commission and towns affected by the project 45 days in advance of filing an application for a certificate of public good. Tonight's meeting is in advance of that opportunity. There will be time for formal comment in addition to the citizen input collected this evening. Rick (last name) passed around a utility terms glossary, to assist the audience in understanding the terminology used in the discussion. He also presented several maps, a slide presentation which included a map, cost charts and other information to aid in understanding the scope, cost and purpose of the project.

Rick explained why CVPS believes the process is needed. The project will mitigate two problems that exist in the three aforementioned towns. The first problem is that a 22 mw of demand for electrical power in this area is served by a radial 46 kv line, with no redundancy or backup. This can result in a loss of power, should the single existing system be damaged by severe weather or an accident. The Middlebury CVPS substation serves the area. There is currently only one line, serving Middlebury and part of Weybridge. If the line is lost from lighting, storms, etc., the only source of power will be unavailable and a blackout would result. In fact, if the line is faulty at any point along the route, the entire line is lost. The second problem is a network problem. If we lose a transformer from Middlebury or New Haven, we have an undervoltage (brownout) condition, which is a problem for service. To solve these two problems, CVPS proposes to connect Weybridge to New Haven with a new 46 kv line. There is a growing area load of 1.2% annually in the Middlebury area summer peak loads. Although distributed resources (DR) cannot save the day, the new transmission facilities can. DR fall into two categories: distributed generation (DG) – small resources spread out over a geographical area, and demand side management (DSM) – load reducers, such as high efficiency light bulbs and other energy efficient technologies. Between these two approaches, they are distributed resources, collectively. We can't use DR in this situation to solve Problem 1, because the radial line needs backup transmission. We could solve Problem 2 with DR.

The proposed new 46 kv line is a 5.4 mile line with mutual backup, stronger connectivity, and lower impedance. Switches on either side would control the flow of power from either side of Middlebury in most cases. The proposed project has an estimated cost of \$3.95 million. CVPS already owns a 100 ROW from Weybridge to New Haven that currently holds a 12 kw distribution line. CVPS proposes to use this ROW and build transmission over the distribution lines. Fred asked if a Middlebury hydro project would serve the needs of the Middlebury area. CVPS said no, it would not. Fred also suggested

that they run a feed line from East Middlebury. CVPS responded that it would not solve the New Haven (VELCO) line problem. Someone asked how long the single feed problem existed. CVPS responded: since the system was designed. And how many times have they shut it down? Very few times. And are there ways to keep the path clear? CVPS responded that the probability of shut down is dramatically reduce with the installation of this project, but it is impossible to remove the risk entirely. CVPS explained that they are doing this project now because the load in Middlebury is growing and they don't like to see that many customers subjected to blackouts, particularly in bad weather. This is a reliability problem, not a load problem. The project will increase the area's reliability a lot, but still not eliminate risk. The project has come up to the top of the list because of the distance of the transmission line increasing in load and the number of customers served.

Considering the benefit/cost analysis, the cost is spread across a large number of residential, commercial and industrial customers. Commercial customers could have a huge lost value in terms of production and sales, if a blackout did occur. CVPS reported that they have a large commercial manufacturer in Middlebury that experienced substantial losses when a switch failed. Lincoln, Starksboro and other towns have had blackouts, as well. Data is available from CVPS on the number of outages experiences, related to Problem 1. Should a transformer break down, it would take a long time to replace it, leaving customers without service. Someone asked if any other places in VT have the same problem. CVPS answered in the affirmative, but this location has the worst problem. The severity of the problem is measured in megawatt miles of exposure – based on the length of the line and the number of megawatts carried within it. In this situation, we have no other means of restoring the line other than by the proposed project. It is the worst situation, and that is why CVPS is focusing on it.

The current line running from Weybridge to New Haven is a distribution line, and therefore carries less electricity. Much of the existing line is cross-country. Ryan Johnson explained how CVPS proposed to use the existing right-of-way. The one possible exception to this would be east of Route 7, where they may go down Town Hill Road or another route.

They were asked if they had three proposals. CVPS said that yes, they looked at several other options, such as connecting with Vermont Marble's System, but Vermont Marble wasn't interested. Therefore, CVPS is showing the project they plan to pursue.

Fred asked about the substation that lies near the falls. Given that Middlebury is growing, he suggested that it would be nice to move that substation and build something else on the waterfront. CVPS responded that relocating a substation is a huge issue. CVPS will look at that in the future. This project will not preclude CVPS from moving the substation by the falls.

Another person asked if this project will expand the East Middlebury substation. No, but Kim explained that there is a proposal to add a capacitor bank inside the East Middlebury substation. That's a minor equipment addition, unrelated to this proposal.

Someone asked if there is an industry standard to determine when to extend lines. CVPS said no, but it is obvious when the need occurs, based on comparisons to other locations.

CVPS needs to maintain sufficient clearance from the VELCO lines. VELCO has right of ways of 75 feet. CVPS tries to maintain a 50 foot distance from the center of the right of way. Therefore, the current VELCO ROW is not large enough to accommodate CVPS's lines, and CVPS will need to expand the ROW in that location. The only place where CVPS will expand the right of way is in New Haven

A citizen asked to be informed ahead of the actual destruction of the trees when they expand the right of way. She also noted that her house is adjacent to the substation and that stray voltage runs around the yard. She asked whether the new line would increase the stray voltage. CVPS responded that this project will not create additional voltages.

Another citizen asked if their field will see increased usage. She explained that transformers near her house had exploded in the past and asked how this project might impact the transformers. CVPS explained that there is another line, but no change in distribution.

Another person asked if the new line will have new transformers at the same locations. CVPS answers that there won't be any ties, taps, or new transformers. It's a new 46 kv line with no connections with the old line. Explosion of the old transformer could affect the new transformer, if the explosion was big enough. Most of the time the new line would continue to transmit power if the old line failed. There is 15 feet of separation between the old and new distribution lines. There are strong winds, but they have considered that. There are design standards that they adhere to.

The suggestion was made that CVPS combine lines on existing poles on Town Hill Road, because there are too many poles there already. CVPS responded that that yes, one alternative could be to use Town Hill Road, but that's not what they are proposing. CVPS prefers not to put transmission lines along roads to avoid the possibility of a car crash taking down the transmission lines.

Kevin asked if their poles match up with VELCO poles. CVPS answered that no, the span would be smaller. The typical span is 400 feet. These poles will look considerably smaller than the VELCO poles. The change will show larger wires, change out of some poles, going up 5 feet in height, and second cross arms will be added to handle the heavier wires to deal with ice loads.

Another question raised was, by increasing the amount of current carried, will that increase the amount of radiation by a significant amount? CVPS responds that electromagnetic radiation studies have been conducted. Any device carrying current has radiation. The question is the relative exposure compared to what people are exposed to in other uses, such as televisions. CVPS can provide information on the amount of exposure, relative to other uses. CVPS noted that the amount of current will increase

along the new line, but decrease along the older line. The line will add only incremental amounts of radiation. A guest remarked that the earth's magnetic field has an exponentially greater effect. CVPS also said that the health department does not see a risk to the public health. Nonetheless, CVPS endeavors to create a distance from the lines to human habitation to reduce exposure to people as a matter of course.

Fred asked about the process. What is the next step? The Towns will see a more formal proposal next spring. CVPS will define the route, environmental issues, and the size of poles soon. The Selectboards can expect to receive more information. CVPS will look into environmental issues, such as the project's effects on wetlands, in the spring. Directly across the river from the Weybridge substation is an upland sandpiper habitat. CVPS will be evaluating how the proposed project would impact its habitat with construction activities. They will also conduct an archeological survey, once the ground is no longer frozen. Design issues will be resolved, such as where the lower Middlebury substation construction will be located. Some landowners have been contacted and CVPS may make changes to pole locations within the ROW to accommodate landowner concerns. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2010. CVPS will spend the year ahead (2009) doing environmental research, surveying, designing and working through the permitting process. CVPS hopes to continue the relationship they have with ACRPC. They cooperate with the Agency of Natural Resources and hope to resolve any issues before submitting an application.

Hewitt Road line relocation is extremely minor line work \$655,000. These changes will not reduce the Bristol brownouts. A lot of those lines were built cross-country right of ways, a lot of wind often and extreme. They rebuilt lines to withstand tree contact, but many trees come from outside the right of way, so it's difficult to keep that circuit on. Insulators and transformers have blown. A lot of money is spent there for maintenance and capital improvements. When VELCO completes their 115 line to Vergennes, the 46 kv line out of the old New Haven substation can go away.

CVPS asked the Commissioners and the audience when they would like another presentation to be scheduled. The general consensus was that we should hold another joint session with them when they have reached a greater level of certainty next summer.

### **Business Meeting:**

**Call to Order:** 9:00 p.m.

Fred Dunnington, Chair of ACRPC called the meeting to order. He welcomed all in attendance and moved quickly to the agenda.

**Approval of Minutes:** Thea Gaudette moved to approve the October minutes. Bruce Webster seconded the motion. Peter Grant noted that he was in attendance at the previous meeting. Ellen noted that her name is spelled "Ellen". Michael Hermann noted that his name should be spelled "Hermann."

**Executive Board Minutes:** Next month we need to include both October and November Executive Board minutes.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Adam gave the Treasurer's First Quarter Report. We still have good fund balances. The accounts receivables are higher than usual, but down from last meeting. We have expended 32% of our Budget. Revenues are ahead of our expenditures, which is always a good thing. Someone asked if our money market account was affected by the current financial crisis. Adam responded that interest rates went down, but we haven't lost any of our principal. Bruce moved to accept the Treasurer's Report and Bob seconded. The Report was unanimously accepted.

**Committee Reports:**

Act 250 – Ellen reported that the Deerview Commercial Subdivision on Route 7 had received a permit.

Brownfields – Ted reported that the committee met to discuss the Shade Roller project, which was completed last year. There is new information from the EPA about contamination from the ledge below. They will await further reports. The Committee is considering two projects out of Whiting, but has not signed any agreements yet.

Energy – Bob reported that the Committee continues to have a full plate. On October 15, he, Ed and Elizabeth attended the seventh annual Renewable Energy Vermont conference in Burlington. A much improved infrastructure from last year allowed for better displays and it was an interesting and informative day-long event. Speakers expressed that Vermont is a viable place for renewable energy production due to point of production being geographically close to the point of use.

On October 17, Bob, Adam and Elizabeth hosted a meeting between bankers of Addison County who offer renewable energy financing programs and renewable energy CEOs. This meeting produced some important dialogue between participants during which Bob suggested a Renewable Energy Vermont (REV) half-day conference between renewable energy industry and financial policy makers. His understanding is that REV has embraced this concept and the committee hopes to see this take place in the first quarter '09. ACRPC and the Energy Committee will help facilitate this event.

On October 23 our monthly outreach program on Renewable Energy Financing was informative and many good questions came up. It is available to view at [www.middleburycommunitytv.org](http://www.middleburycommunitytv.org) and a video is available from Elizabeth.

The November 7 Committee toured the New Christian School in Vergennes. This structure boasts a major commitment to energy efficiency and use of natural light. The 14,000 square foot building cost \$2.5 million to construct, at a cost of \$178 psf. I would urge all area school boards to tour this building if contemplating a construction or renovation project.

The Town Energy Coordinators Training Fair scheduled for tomorrow (November 13) has been postponed to Thursday, January 8 from 6:30-9:30 p.m. (extended hours.)

Local Government Committee – Thea had no activity to report.

Natural Resources Committee – Mary Dodge reported that the Committee is finishing up the wildlife section of the Plan. The full Natural Resources Plan is anticipated to be up for readoption next fall.

TAC – Andrew Manning reported that there was no meeting last month. Bob McNary reported that there will be a meeting this month and that representatives of each of Vermont's Federal legislators will be present. Additionally, Transportation Secretary Dill will look at Routes 30 and 125 and the Committee will host a meeting here for whoever wants to meet with him, in the daytime on a date in December yet to be determined.

Ralph suggested that the ACTR bus service be extended to Cornwall. Adam noted that it is not a top priority of ACTR, but is on the list for expansion. ACTR's priority is to split the Tri-Town bus into two routes - Vergennes to Middlebury, and Bristol to Middlebury, directly. Service to Upstate New York is also being considered, and maybe it can go through Cornwall.

### **New Business:**

Fred announced that Robin Sheu has been selected to replace Jamie Stewart at Economic Development. Adam noted that ACRPC is investigating partnering with them on a potential EDA grant to Ripton. There will be a meeting in Ripton next week on the impacts of the flooding that occurred this summer. The goal is for local officials to respond to ideas to help the town of Ripton regarding erosion problems in the village center of Ripton, where the local store, school, and municipal buildings are located. Damage was also extensive to the trails in the mountains in Ripton.

Delegate/Staff Recognition – Elizabeth Golden's home sustained a severe fire on November 2, rendering her home uninhabitable. She will be relocating to a rental home shortly for six months, during which the reconstruction will be made. She apologized for anything that did not get done in her six day absence. The Newsletter was omitted for November as a result. Bruce asked if she could send out the two month calendar by email. Elizabeth agreed to do so. Adam asked if anyone did not have an email address. Elizabeth noted that Kent would need a mailed copy.

Adam announced that Tim Bouton, Emergency Management Planner, will be the new Public Safety District liaison for Troop District 6, which include Addison, Bennington and Rutland Counties. We are expecting a contract for his work to be signed soon, resulting in additional revenue for the ACRPC. This is a good program for Tim to be involved in.

Adam noted the upcoming Full Commission Meeting speakers:

December – our newly elected legislators will come back with their plans and ask for your input.

January - Jennifer Bleich from Middlebury College will inform us on their new master plan, which was an extensive process that won prestigious collegiate awards.

February – Caroline from the Public Service Board will be talking about the State of Vermont’s Telecom plan. Bruce suggested that Adam contact the chair of the Vermont Telecom Authority to come to the meeting as well.

March – A presentation on Lewis Creek’s latest activities. Bob suggested we offer a future program on managing town forests, an idea generated at an energy committee meeting. Adam asked the Commissioners to offer any suggestions they have for future programs.

Charlie Huizenga announced that the Vermont Emergency Management group calendars are available tonight to take back to their towns.

A Goodrich employee said that an ACTR bus route to Upstate New York would be helpful to the company where he works. The company has 500 professionals and 400 other employees, a reduction from years past, due to the lack of affordable housing here in Vermont. This is a significant barrier to expand the company. If we could elaborate what we need in terms of housing in Vermont, businesses can grow by attracting people here. (name), a retired Goodrich employee, noted that the Goodrich plant once had 2,200 employees, working in 3 shifts, but the number was artificial high, as a huge amount were military employees. Currently, Goodrich employees 700-800 people, in one shift. However, they are hiring people. Michael Hermann noted that there are a lot of people working there, evidenced by the fact that he sees them all going past his house every day!

Milo noted that he wrote an email to Elizabeth about his concerns that Town Plans lack specific goals, and therefore accountability to action. He recommends measurable goals be included in Town Plans.

Fred noted that in the Housing VT Annual Report Addison County highest the highest amount of affordable housing of all the counties in the State. He recognizes that more still needs to be done. Attracting business is an important goal. Someone suggested that we collect information on affordable housing. Adam announced the Fair Housing Seminar being presented tomorrow at 1:00 pm at our offices. He defined fair housing as regulations governing housing discrimination.

Jim Peabody suggested that ACRPC should do more in the area of affordable housing in Addison County, and recommended that a subcommittee be formed to address the issue. Mary Dodge agreed. However, no one moved such a motion. Andrew Manning noted that his wife works with CVOEO, which places people in affordable housing, and she tells

him that they cannot find sufficient affordable houses. Ralph said that Cornwall is looking to develop affordable housing via the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process. He welcomed people emailing him if they would like to make something happen to work on the problem. Ed Payne said that one of the things we have problems with is the high property taxes, which are out of line, and taxes make housing less affordable. Bob McNary suggested that one of the significant problems with building affordable housing is the prevalence of clay soils, resulting in no septic system being built, and no infrastructure for sewer disposal systems. As a result, hundreds of acres cannot be built upon and thousands of acres are in conservation, which reduces the amount of land available for building housing. Adam will add a discussion on affordable housing to the agenda for our next Full Commission meeting.

Adam announced that 'The Place You Call Home' by the Northern Woodlands Council – things you can do for wildlife on your property is available. He handed out postcards you can send in to get a free copy.

**Adjournment:**

Peter Grant moved for adjournment. Bruce seconded. The Meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m..

Respectfully submitted,  
Elizabeth Golden