

Meeting Minutes
Addison County Regional Planning Commission
Wednesday, January 14, 2009

The ACRPC January meeting was held at ACRPC's office on January 14, 2009 with Fred Dunnington, Chair, presiding.

ROLL CALL:

Addison:

<i>Bridport:</i>	Ed Payne Andrew Manning Mike Gamache	<i>Panton:</i>	Michael Hermann
<i>Bristol:</i>	William Sayre	<i>Ripton:</i>	Jeremy Grip Ted Dunakin
<i>Cornwall:</i>	Mary Dodge	<i>Salisbury:</i>	
<i>Ferrisburgh</i>	Bob McNary	<i>Shoreham:</i>	
<i>Goshen:</i>		<i>Starksboro:</i>	
<i>Leicester:</i>		<i>Waltham:</i>	
<i>Lincoln:</i>	Dave D'Allienne	<i>Weybridge:</i>	
<i>Middlebury:</i>	Fred Dunnington	<i>Whiting:</i>	Ellen Kurrelmeyer Jonathan Heppell
<i>Monkton:</i>	Thea Gaudette Charles Huizenga	<i>Vergennes:</i>	
<i>New Haven:</i>			
<i>Orwell:</i>	David King Clyde Park		

CITIZEN INTEREST REPRESENTATIVES:

<i>Addison County Farm Bureau:</i>	Kent Wright
<i>Addison County Economic Development Corp:</i>	
<i>Otter Creek Audubon Society:</i>	
<i>Otter Creek Natural Resources:</i>	
<i>Addison County Chamber of Commerce:</i>	

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
EM/Senior Planner: Tim Bouton
Transportation/Senior Planner: Richard Kehne
Land Use/Environmental Planner: Elizabeth Golden
Office Manager/Bookkeeper: Pauline Cousino

Program: Jennifer Bleich, a Project Manager with the Middlebury College Office of Facility Services, presented the Middlebury College Master Plan that they recently completed with the help of Michael Denis and Associates of Boston, MA. The Master Plan recently received an award from the Boston Society of Architects. Jennifer introduced and described Middlebury's Plan, the process the College used to create it, specific areas of emphasis within the Plan, the Plan's interaction with and impact on the greater community and the College's schedule for implementing the Plan.

The Master Plan was a two year process, begun in April of 2006 and completed in May, 2008. It was a response to their Strategic Plan. The College also created Sustainable Design Guidelines and their recently constructed Library is certified as a LEED building (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). Their focus areas for the plan included: architectural character and scale, pedestrian access, natural landscaping, relationship to the town, variety of campus open spaces, accommodating the summer Language School's open space needs, distribution of funds, and connectivity of various areas of the campus.

The College performed an Energy Audit of 40 buildings on campus, and is now beginning a process of an ADA Audit. They also conducted a parking and circulation study, utilities study, and are working on consolidating academic departments. The design endeavors to blend the campus into the rural landscape and the larger community.

The College considers themselves at the maximum number of students, 2,350, and the Master Plan does not expand accommodations for any more students. Rather, it includes replacing some existing housing and academic buildings that are aging, improving parking distribution across the campus, adding a performing arts center, improving landscaping, developing three quads into more aesthetically pleasing open spaces, and realigning pathways and future building locations to enhance east to west viewsheds. It takes approximately 20-25 minutes to walk from any one side of the campus to the opposite side, and the College considers this the maximum acceptable walking distance. They have no intentions to expanding the outer edge of their campus, rather, they intend to infill the existing campus land area with any new buildings, and replace some older buildings to improve the layout. The Master Plan looks 50 years into the future, as a general guide to where buildings might be best located, should they be needed. There are no immediate plans for construction, due to the current economic downturn.

Other plans include improving drainage in the grassy areas; adding sidewalks, burying electric cables, removing parking spaces, and adding trees along College Street; removing student parking areas from the center of the campus; and replacing dying tall trees from the quads with shorter height trees. They also plan to add roundabouts at either end of College Street, and at the crosswalk in front of the Arts Center. They plan to repurpose McCullough Hall and build a new student center on Route 30.

Jenn reported that the new biomass center is operational and that its use will cut the College's usage of #6 oil dramatically.

The College has been respectful of neighboring communities, and endeavors to maintain the adjacent family neighborhoods. They have no plans to purchase additional houses in such neighborhoods, but when they are donated or offered to the College, they may accept such donations, and use the buildings for special interest student housing, such as the German House. In their long-term plan, they hope to bring all of the students who live off campus back into College campus housing.

Jenn asked Fred Dunnington to share his perception of the College's planning process. Fred remembers that in the 1990's, the College planned a 10% expansion into the Ridgeline Neighborhood with eight social (fraternity) houses and a social barn. The neighborhood was so against the proposal, that the College bought all of the houses in order to satisfy the neighbors. Fred explained how the College is accustomed to dealing with a difficult planning process, as they have to find solutions that accommodate many differing interests: donors, departments, academics, architects, and trustees. He also noted that buildings constructed on campus are considered part of an overall PUD development, and thus don't require parking nearby. This allows the College to tailor their parking lots to an overall plan that reduces car movement within the campus. He noted that students would drive from one parking lot to another to go to the athletic building in order not to walk!

Michael Hermann asked if the College owned the fraternity buildings, as he remembered problems that Dartmouth had with fraternities on their campus. Jenn answered that there are fraternities which own their buildings and the land under them at Middlebury, and that it is difficult to deal with some of the issues they create in terms of harmony with their neighbors.

Jenn told the group that there is no limit on the number of cars a student, staff or faculty can park on campus. Some students have registered two cars-one for winter and a convertible for summer! She said that the campus can accommodate the cars, generally. Someone asked if garages were an option for providing more parking. Jenn replied that is not being considered within the current Master Plan, and parking has been deliberately kept away from adjacent neighborhoods, to afford better viewsheds and privacy. The problem with providing parking on the fringes of the campus include the unlikelihood that students will use the parking, and that it would involve outward expansion of the College campus. The group talked about safety issues along Route 125/College Street. Several suggestions were made: removing parking from the street to allow greater visibility of students preparing to enter the crosswalk, improving lighting, and offering "courtesy" training of students to respect that drivers, too, need to pass through the center of campus on Route 125. Fred noted that it is the law to yield to pedestrians, but that they need to yield to cars as well to keep the traffic flowing during busy commuting hours. He also noted that, in retrospect, it probably would have been better to locate the Arts Center in downtown Middlebury, and that the College does indeed offer many resources and economic support for the Town of Middlebury.

Business Meeting:

Call to Order: 9:05 p.m.

Fred Dunnington, Chair of ACRPC called the meeting to order. Adam noted that the minutes of the November and December Full Commission meetings and the December Executive Board meeting were emailed to everyone for whom we have an email address, and mailed to those for whom we do not have an email address, along with the Agenda.

Approval of Minutes: November 12, 2008: Thea moved that the minutes of the November 12 meeting be accepted; Bob seconded. Mary Dodge asked that the minutes include that she suggested in November that the Commission should take on the issue of affordable housing. The minutes were unanimously accepted.

December 10, 2008: Thea moved that the minutes of the November 12 meeting be accepted; Bob seconded. Thea noted that the word 'November' should be changed to 'December' at the head of the minutes. The minutes were unanimously accepted.

Executive Board Minutes: There were no questions on the Board Minutes, and Fred noted that they do not need to be accepted, but are for informational purposes.

Treasurer's Report: Thea handed out the Treasurer's Report. Adam noted that all balances are in good shape and operations are going as expected. Clyde Park requested that a fund balance of the ACRPC's assets be included in future Treasurer's Reports, as they had been in the past. Adam agreed to do so. Bob moved that the Treasurer's Report be accepted; Charlie seconded. The Treasurer's Report was unanimously accepted.

Committee Reports:

Act 250 – Ellen reported that Otter Creek Engineering applied for a permit on behalf of Craig Newton to subdivide one lot in the Middlebury Industrial Park on December 19, 2008. The lot currently holds Agway. The second lot created is currently vacant. The Newton's will sell the Agway lot and retain the vacant lot. No development is planned on the vacant lot at this time. Fred noted that Agway is located on Exchange Street, south of the Industrial Park, and that the subdivision was approved by the Town of Middlebury. An amendment to divide is not an issue for the Town.

On November 19, 2008, Vallee Holding LLC filed an application to amend an existing permit to allow it to modify its existing service station at the corner of Route 22A and Route 74 in Shoreham. Modifications will be made to the deli space inside, additional gas pumps and canopy, and additional parking and landscaping. The District 9 Environmental Commission issued a permit on December 23, 2008.

On December 1, 2008, Francis and Diane Heffernan files two separate applications to extend the expiration and operation of a previously approved gravel pit on Hardscrabble Road in Bristol to September 15, 2013. The District 9 Environmental Commission issued two permits on January 9, 2009.

Brownfields – Jeremy report that the Committee has not met recently. Their next meeting is on Thursday at noon. At that meeting, the Committee will discuss the Shade Roller Mill Project with the consultants and where to go from here with recommendations.

Energy – Bob reported that the Committee met on Friday, January 2, and continues its work on many projects, to review a few:

1. ACRPC Office Upgrade: A new 8 gallon electric water heater has been installed to replace the old 115 gallon heater. The Committee expects a significant savings on our electric bill. Also, draft guards have been installed on the two doors leading into the garage area.
2. Half-day R.E.V. Conference: Renewable Energy Vermont officials have signed on to our concept of a half-day conference between alternative energy CEOs and the financial community policy makers. Our information is that they are forming a sub-committee to address the idea and that it will be on the agenda for the REV Annual Meeting in May, 2009.
3. Community Forestry Program: The Committee is beginning to form the structure of a county-wide program to extract firewood on a sustainable basis from town owned forests for use by residents of those towns.
4. On January 8, we held a Town Energy Coordinator Training, presented by Elizabeth. A comprehensive agenda was developed, which led to a spirited and educational discussion. Bob encouraged all town energy coordinators to attend future trainings, as they are a valuable tool for their work.
5. On Thursday, January 22, VPIRG will present a program “Renewable Alternatives to Vermont Yankee” from 7-9 p.m. Bob noted that the program is for informational purposes only, and that neither the Full Commission, nor the Energy Committee have take a position on whether Entergy should receive an extension of their contract to operate Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant. A lively debate is expected. Bob encourages everyone to attend to share their questions and views, so we can be more informed on this timely and important issue.

Local Government Committee – Thea reported that there is no activity.

Natural Resources Committee – Mary Dodge reported that the Committee is making slow progress on revising the Natural Resources section of the Regional Plan. There was no quorum at the last meeting, so they could not complete their work for the meeting. Fred commented that the revisions were scheduled to be completed by May, 2009. Elizabeth noted that it will most likely be completed in September.

TAC – Adam reported that there was a tour with Secretary Dill, but no meeting last month. They toured several state routes Addison County, particularly emphasizing the

conditions along the East-West roads. Secretary Dill was receptive, but constrained from promising a lot of action because of the state budget.

Old Business:

Strategic Planning – Adam had copies of the Strategic Planning Process outline available. He noted that an email inviting participation in the Survey was emailed last Thursday to about 200 people who use ACRPC's services, such as Town Clerks, Selectboard and Planning Commissions, Zoning Administrators, and Legislators. He has already received 20 completed surveys. We are using SurveyMonkey, which compiles the data, saving staff time. Andrew asked if anyone can complete the survey. Adam responded that if anyone has recommendations for others who use ACRPC services to receive the survey, they may send their requests to Elizabeth, who will send an email invitation, or a printed letter to them. He also mentioned that those who complete the survey will be invited to attend a light dinner at part of the February Executive Board Meeting to share their thoughts to inform our Strategic Planning effort.

Adoption of Municipal Dues for 2009/2010 - Adam distributed the Executive Board's Proposed Municipal Assessments for FY 2009-2010. He noted that, although it appears that the population of Addison County dropped in 2007, the figures are from Census estimates, which were steadily increased each year since 2000 based on 1990's projections, and that they had to be adjusted downward in 2007 to actual figures. The estimate population times the multiplier equals the assessment. It is a simple mathematical equation. Bob moved that the Commission accept the Municipal Due Assessment; Thea seconded, and the dues were accepted unanimously.

ACRPC and Municipal Planning Grant Budget Cuts – Adam reported that the State government has cut DHCA-Department of Housing and Community Action-funding twice recently, a 5% cut in August and another 8% cut in December, 2008. As a result, our Budget was decreased by \$30,000 from our FY 2008-2009 Budget. To accommodate the reduction, Adam has deferred hiring a planner to fill the position left vacant by Amy. Extra funds were picked up from Emergency Management funds when Tim became a liaison to District 5. Adam is working on other ways to fill the Budget gap, as well. Next month, he will bring a Budget amendment to adjust the FY 2009-2010 Budget to the Full Commission. He was warned that the FY 2009-2010 Budget would likely experience another cut, and would be based on the FY 2008-2009 levels. He is looking at other ways to bring in more funding and reduce expenses. Fred noted that the Executive Board will be paying attention to the Budget. He noted that the Transportation funding was also reduced, as were the Town Budgets.

Adam reported that Municipal Planning Grant funding was cut 50% for new awards. Addison County was originally estimated to receive about \$62,000 (\$62,529) in Planning Grants, applied for nearly \$100,000 (\$92,325), and will be receiving only about \$30,000. It is expected that the only applications to receive grants this year will be for Town Plan Updates, which are required to be revised every five years, and for the basis for all other Municipal Planning. Elizabeth noted that she expects to receive perhaps three or four

MPGs for Town Plan updates this year. Thea noted that she doesn't expect Monkton to get the funding they requested for a study of building a new Town Hall.

Distribution of Updated Sections of the Regional Plan – Adam distributed the revised Land Use and Transportation sections of the Regional Plan and asked the Commissioners to add them to their copy of the Regional Plan. He noted that the Plan is also available to download from our website, www.acrpg.org.

New Business:

Email Delivery of Information Packet – Adam asked the Commissioners if they received their Meeting Agenda, Minutes, and Newsletters. Nearly all of the Commissioners received their packets. He noted that the packet will be distributed by email to everyone who has an email address in our database from now on, and that anyone who hasn't given us their email address should please do so, so we can convert to email mailings, to save costs and time. Several Commissioners gave their current email addresses to Elizabeth, who is sending out information packets each month.

Business Cards for Chairpersons – Adam announced that ACRPC is ordering new business cards for staff, as the old cards have our old address on Court Street, and that Committee Chairs may request business cards, if they have a use for them. Elizabeth will order cards for the Chairs.

Other Business:

Mary Dodge requested that the issue of affordable housing be added to next meeting's agenda, which Adam agreed to do. He apologized for not having added it to this month's agenda.

Adjournment: Charlie moved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Golden