

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Addison County Regional Planning Commission**  
**Wednesday, July 8, 2009**

*The ACRPC July Meeting was held at the ACRPC offices on July 10, 2009 with Thea Gaudette, Chair, presiding.*

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**ROLL CALL:**

<i>Addison:</i>			David King
<i>Bridport:</i>	Ed Payne Andrew Manning	<i>Panton:</i>	Michael Hermann
<i>Bristol:</i>	Peter Grant	<i>Ripton:</i>	
<i>Cornwall:</i>	Mary Dodge Ralph Teitscheid	<i>Salisbury:</i>	
<i>Ferrisburgh</i>	Bob McNary Larry Keyes	<i>Shoreham:</i>	
<i>Goshen:</i>		<i>Starksboro:</i>	
<i>Leicester:</i>		<i>Vergennes:</i>	Alyth Hescoock
<i>Lincoln:</i>	Steve Revell Dave D'Allienne	<i>Waltham:</i>	
<i>Middlebury:</i>		<i>Weybridge:</i>	
<i>Monkton:</i>	Thea Gaudette Charles Huizenga	<i>Whiting:</i>	Ellen Kurrelmeyer
<i>New Haven:</i>	Harvey Smith		
<i>Orwell:</i>	Clyde Park		

**CITIZEN INTEREST REPRESENTATIVES:**

*Addison County Farm Bureau:*  
*Addison County Economic Development Corp:* Harvey Smith  
*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  
*EM/Senior Planner:* Tim Bouton  
*Transportation/Senior Planner:* Richard Kehne  
*Land Use/Environmental Planner:* Elizabeth Golden  
*Office Manager/Bookkeeper:* Pauline Cousino

**Program:** Thea called the meeting to order at 7:37 pm and ask Adam to introduce the speakers. Our program today is on dairy agriculture (ag) in Addison County. Adam introduced Gabe Clark and Andrew Whitman from the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences in Brunswick, Maine. Andrew presented a program about the work they are doing to develop a vital capital scorecard for assessing sustainability of dairy agriculture. They are working with Cabot Cheese – Agri-Mark and Dairy Management Inc. (DMI). They would like to capture our thoughts this evening, and can provide summaries of what they found in other communities as well. Manomet is a non-profit environmental organization with offices in Massachusetts, Maine and Brattleboro, Vermont. They focus on all of the goods and services that nature provides, from clean air, water and food, to other things that contribute to our quality of life. Their strategy to support change is to do scientific research to help resolve conflicts in values around environmental issues. Agri-Mark is a dairy cooperative; the farmers actually own shares in the co-op. Walmart was pushing on the dairy industry for sustainably produced products. The general questions were about whether dairy is a sustainable industry. DMI got interested.

Manomet's research is about sustainability – environmental, social and economic. They talk to stakeholders to find out how dairy ag can contribute to the sustainability or how it holds back a community. The scorecard will represent the key values of Vermont's communities. They are looking for our diverse perspectives, to integrate into the score card. They are also doing field testing for components, or stewardship topics that identify the key values, the social science side of the research. The scientific process will tell what the key indicators that represent the key values. Kevin asked who would be using the scorecard. Andrew answered that the farmer may use it in a self-reporting system. There will also be some spot checks to verify the reliability of the data reported. There are three major sustainability efforts, one is third party certification. Some farmers would like to use the scorecard to be able to talk about how their farms compare favorably to other farmers and other communities. Agri-Mark is interested in reporting collectively how well their farmers perform.

Harvey asked if scorecards are used in other areas. Andrew replied that they have scorecards for carbon offsets and forestry elsewhere. Harvey asked if best management practices will be part of the equation. Andrew said that Gabe is using best management practices as part of the indicators. They can be used to improve practices without regulation. Dave D'Alleinne asked how you validate the data. Andrew said that they have peer review of the final draft of the scorecard. Dave asked if there is a predictive model. Andrew replied that it's not a sophisticated model, but it shows the level of predictability. Some models may be included. They are aiming for a half-hour process to complete the scorecard, plus a list of indicators, for a quick understanding of what farmers can do to improve their performance. There will be a tool kit, and possibly a consultant involved. This will be applicable to dairy farms from across the US.

Ralph asked is they are funded by the State of Vermont. Andrew replied that 1/3 of their funding comes from Federal contracts, 1/3 from environmental foundations, and 1/3 from the ag industry, directly or indirectly. Ralph asked how Manomet came to bet. Andrew answered that they started by looking at birds, the preservation of their habitat, and

ultimately sustainability, and grew to deal with all three components – social, economic and environmental – a triple bottom line focus. Michael Hermann noted that they have to work through the demands of many diverse interests. He asked if their Board of Directors meets to review their focus periodically. Andrew said that ye, they look at how to reconfigure themselves over time. Michael noted that, as an attorney, he looks at how to get people to do the right thing for themselves in the long run. Andrew confirmed that they, too, look at how they can pay people to protect the forests, for example, to have a sustainable resource that the industry needs. They look for non-regulatory solutions, to reward people to do the right thing. They are also looking at how to inspire farmers to do the right thing to protect water, soil and wildlife. Ralph asked if they have more information on such a program. Andrew replied that the best way to make a farmer change is to offer financial incentives to do so. That is their next step after the scorecard is developed.

Andrew conducted an exercise to identify what the local dairy farms provide to our community, from scenic view to receiving taxes. He asked the commissioners to write down things that they value in each of three categories – social, economic and environmental. They may also write about concerns they have related to dairy ag. Andrew and Gabe will record what people think and grouped the ideas that are similar. The Commissioners offered the following comments.

Benefits: Soil health and fertility; habitat preservation; recreational benefits such as hunting, fishing, hiking and birding areas; economic driver from growing - to services - to ag manufacturing employment; view sheds; the comfort of consistent scenery; open fields and forests; manure as a local fertilizer and energy source; community infrastructure – live and work in the same community; industry; providing a local food source; water quality protection; volunteer services of people who live and work locally; farmers are good conservationists; quality of life broadly; farmers' work ethics; security of maintaining land for food production and diversity of food products; maintains communities over generations; small, independent businesses; and how dairy ag focuses development in villages centers to avoid sprawl.

Problems: Particulate levels; manure on the roads; insufficient income to support farmers; need to maintain right to farm legislation; lack of support for farmer's needs; need price supports for milk; need to increase efficiency of production; farmers need financial stability over time; and a farmer's need for the freedom to put their hands on the land and do what's necessary to keep their farm viable.

Andrew summed up the discussion, saying that what we suggested shows support for the dairy ag community, and is similar to what other regions say. In working with farmers, they are all concerned with the economic side, but also the social and environmental side.

Thea thanked Andrew and Gabe for their presentation and announced a ten minute break.

## **Business Meeting:**

**Call to Order:** Thea called the business meeting to order at 9:00 p.m.

- I. **Approval of Minutes:** June 10, 2009 – Mary Dodge and Andrew Manning made corrections to the minutes. Bob moved to accept the minutes as revised; Peter seconded. The revised minutes were unanimously accepted; with David King abstaining.
- II. **Executive Board Minutes:** June 24, 2009 – Thea noted that the minutes have been provided for the information of the Commission. She asked for questions and there were none.
- III. **Treasurer's Report:** Adam spoke about the report for the end of the fiscal year. 85% of our revenues are in, 88% of our billables have been send. We haven't billed much of the last quarter's receivables yet. Once that's done, our revenues will exceed our expenses for the year. Ed moved and Bob seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report. The vote was unanimous to accept the Treasurer's Report.

## **IV. Committee Reports:**

**Act 250** –Ellen reported that on June 12, 2009 the Middlebury College Snowbowl filed for an amendment to its existing Land Use Permit requesting permission to allow it to replace the existing Worth Mountain Chair with a new chairlift and operators facilities. On July 6, 2009 the District 9 Environmental Commission issued a Land Use Permit to the Middlebury Ambulance Association and Middlebury College to build an ambulance emergency center off Collins Drive in Middlebury near Porter Hospital. On June 26, 2009 the District 9 Environmental Commission issued a Land Use Permit to Mothership, LLC to subdivide a 68 acre parcel of land into two parcels, one to house a single family home and the other to house a single family o home and 6 cottages that will serve as a summer camp for disabled campers. The project is located off of Zeno Road in Lincoln. On July 1, 2009 Trudell Consulting Engineers filed for a conditional use permit to build an access Road to the Fenn Gravel pit located off of Route 116 in Middlebury. The Committee expects an Act 250 application will follow shortly.

**Brownfields** – Adam reported that the committee has not met; they are waiting for the Phase 2 report for the mill and will discuss others

**Energy** – Bob reported that the Energy Committee meeting will be held this Friday, due to July 3 being a holiday. The June presentation was on Energy Conservation and Efficiency. Our speakers were George Lawrence from Efficiency Vermont and Warren King, the Ripton Town Energy Coordinator. The flow of this program was excellent, as George's PowerPoint presentation explained the technical side of conservation and efficiency; and Warren spoke to how he and his committee put that technology into practice. Close to one third of Ripton's homes were served. This effort is producing considerable savings in terms of money and energy, and lowering the carbon footprint of

the town. On July 23, we will present a program on wood boilers. Bob encouraged school boards and building owners to attend the program.

**Local Government** – Thea noted that nothing has arrived yet. Elizabeth added that there will be a couple of requests for review shortly.

**Natural Resources** – Mary Dodge reported that the committee did not meet in June; Kevin added that they will meet in July.

TAC – Andrew reported that Diane Lanpher gave a report on what the highway administration is doing on highway work at their last meeting.

**V. Joint Partners Report:**

Harvey reported that he was appointed the representative of the Economic Development Corp.

**VI: Delegate/Staff Recognition:**

Kevin noted that Lewis Creek Association, who presented our program last month, sent a thank you note. He suggested Commissioners refer to the Chittenden County RPC who just completed a water quality plan.

**VI. Old Business:**

Strategic Planning: Adam reported that we have been looking at what we can do to improve our work. We came up with a couple of new directions that we should be going in and things that need more focus. The new part of this outline he distributed with the agenda packet is who would do the work. It also includes how we are going to accomplish these improvements over the coming years. The Executive Board recommended that we appoint a new Strategic Planning Committee to do much of the new work – basically it is marketing outreach work. Other tasks are being given to existing committees, such as the Local Government Committee, which will provide local technical assistance. The Executive Board recommended that we appoint a committee whose charge is to insure that we do not lose track of the goal and objectives of the Strategic Plan. They would be responsible for helping the Commission implement what we have heard and were recommended to us. He suggested that the Commissioners give some thought as to whether this committee has some value. The E Board feels very strongly that we put this committee in place. The Bylaws support this action. Bob moved that the Full Commission create a Strategic Planning Committee; Ed seconded.

Discussion: Michael Hermann noted that there is often not a strategic planning central organizing committee to make things happen at the right time, to indicate what should happen and look at the overarching mandates. He suggested that the Committee can do the overview and that is an important thing to have. Dave D'Alleinne asked if that is the charge of the committee. Thea replied that it is. Bob added that it's an important endeavor because the Strategic Plan takes us in another direction.

Bob asked whether the Executive Director should draw up a list of duties for the new Committee. Adam replied that has drawn up a charge. He quoted from the Strategic Plan Outline, dated July 2009: The new Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee will “help to identify region-wide interests of the ACRPC; promote better coordination among towns for natural resources, renewable energy resources, utilities/facilities, infrastructure and other planning; ensure that each town knows of ACRPC and knows all of the services it provides; and create a marketing plan that targets specific constituents and engages the towns and town officers in ACRPC’s work.” Dave asked if this was a change of direction. Adam replied that it is not. We are a mature organization; we’ve been doing planning for a long time and that’s still our focus. He added that any organization can do things better; and over time, the focus can shift. It’s kind of a refocusing of energies. Ralph asked how will the committee will refocus the energy and how will it implement it. Adam answered that the Committee will recommend to the full commission whatever actions should be taken and recommend what person should implement those actions. Or it may assign the staff to do it. The Committee reports to the Full Commission.

Thea added that there are some things in their charge that they can do without Commission review. If it’s significant, they will come back to the Commission for direction. Ralph asked if it is an oversight committee. Thea responded that no, it’s not. They will be looking at the actions of the commission from a new perspective, the larger picture, a more holistic view. Mary asked what the role of this committee would be, in comparison to the role of the Executive Board. Thea explained that the role of the Executive Board is to look at everything the Commission does, and in particular, provide fiscal overview. The role of the Strategic Planning Committee, in contrast, is to take a broader view of the greater mission of the Commission, and to guide us toward fulfilling it according to the needs in 2009. Ralph wanted to know what this Committee will be charged to do before he voted on adding such a Committee. Adam directed him to look at the Committee Assignment Sheet. It states that “the Committee with the help and support of the staff will lead the effort to implement the new goals set forth in the Strategic Plan. The Committee will work on some goals and assign others to an existing committee or member of the staff to implement.” It may be a marketing committee in some respects. Bob mentioned that we talked about marketing ourselves better. Dave added that we will market the Commission’s mission and what services we offer. Thea added that it is time to go out and toot our own horn to the towns interested in ongoing participation and meet the town’s needs. Thea called for a vote on the motion. The motion to appoint a new Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee was unanimously approved, with David abstaining.

## **VII. New business:**

### **Town Selection of Delegates and Alternates:**

Adam alerted the Commissioners that we still need appointment confirmation from Salisbury, Shoreham, Starksboro and Weybridge. He asked the Commissioners to please talk to their clerks. All citizen interest groups except Economic Development have not responded.

### **Committee Assignments:**

Peter mentioned that we need to add a line for our name on the form. Thea noted that each Commissioner may select up to three Committees to volunteer for. She asked that they indicate if they have a preference for one over the other. Adam requested that the forms be turned in after the meeting. Thea noted that the Executive Board will make Committee assignments, and that there is no guarantee you will get your choice of Committee, but they will try to accommodate everyone on their first choice.

### **Programs for Next Year:**

Adam asked for ideas for next year's programs which the Commissioners and their communities are interested in. Mary recommended that staff talk more about their work. Peter suggested a program on planning for gravel and other resources extraction. Charlie added that gas leases are a hot topic in New York State in the Finger Lakes. Harvey added that he just got appointed to an oversight board on gas leases. The subject has been dormant for ten years. This ties in with energy production overall. Ed noted that the Agency of Natural Resources is not likely to support gas extraction in Vermont. Adam noted that twenty years ago Cambrian Gas Company had leases throughout the Champlain Valley. Ed can't see anything happening due to our current state regulatory climate. Michael noted that Addison County has changed radically since then; there has been an economic shift with shortages in petrol. David King added "especially when our state can make money out of it." Ellen suggested a program on how new septic regulations are affecting our county as houses change hands and they come under the new regulations. She wondered how the various towns are working it out. Steve Revell replied that it's generally been slow. Replacements get the most priority. To the greatest degree there is some level of reasonableness. The one thing the State of VT will never do is condemn a house. We need to get over that concern. So replacements systems are the compliance solution. There are some still pushing \$40,000 disposal systems, but there is room for people in the industry to be reasonable, to look at the environmental consequences. Alyth added that another thing they did with the new rules was that you no longer need a field for the new system and they decreased the minimum number of bedrooms from 3 to 2; it's flexible and there are some new things in there. Ralph added that something significant has happened. A large wind farm was rejected. This may give us some funding for smaller wind systems. He was wondering if we could stimulate the growth of wind power in our county with a little more push now than before. Thea suggested that would be a task for the Energy Committee to look at.

### **Other New Business:**

Charlie suggested that Adam provide a schedule of when each of the Committees meets to inform the Commissioners prior to them committing to particular Commission assignments. Adam replied that none of our meetings conflict with each other in the time that they meet. The staff person in charge of the Committee needs to get the meeting schedule to Elizabeth to put on the newsletter calendar. TAC, Energy and NRC meet at regular times. Charlie recommends that the Strategic Planning Committee schedule avoid the times that those Committees meet.

Kevin announced that he went to the meeting of the Council on the Future of Vermont. He passed out a summary of their report, which they have been working on for almost

two years. They came up with some interesting ideas. The full report is also available which include a chronology of the progress of Vermont over the last ten years. They have attempted to come up with the public perception of where Vermont has been and where it will be in the future. The project is funded by Rural Development. The inside covers lists board members, which is a diverse group. If you have questions, they have web pages, you can contact them. They are looking for feedback.

**X. Adjournment:**

Peter moved to adjourn the meeting, Ralph seconded. Thea adjourned the meeting at 9:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elizabeth Golden