

***Draft Meeting Minutes***  
**Addison County Regional Planning Commission**  
**Wednesday, November 11, 2009**

*The ACRPC November Meeting was held at the ACRPC offices on November 11, 2009 with Thea Gaudette, Chair, presiding.*

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**ROLL CALL:**

*Addison:*

*Bridport:* Andrew Manning  
Mike Gamache  
Mark Pumiglia

*Bristol:*

*Cornwall:* Mary Dodge

*Ferrisburgh:* Bob McNary  
Larry Keyes

*Goshen:* Chad Chamberlain

*Leicester:* James Maroney

*Lincoln:*

*Middlebury:* Fred Dunnington  
Pat Peters

*Monkton:* Thea Gaudette  
Charles Huizenga

*New Haven:*

*Orwell:* David King

*Panton:*

*Ripton:* Jeremy Grip  
Ted Dunakin

*Salisbury:*

*Shoreham:*

*Starksboro:* Jan McCleery

*Vergennes:*

*Waltham:*

*Weybridge:*

*Whiting:* Ellen Kurrelmeyer

**CITIZEN INTEREST REPRESENTATIVES:**

*Addison County Farm Bureau:*

Kent Wright

*Addison County Economic Development Corp:*

*Otter Creek Audubon Society:*

Margaret Lowe

*Otter Creek Natural Resources:*

*Addison County Chamber of Commerce:*

**ACRPC EXECUTIVE BOARD**

*Chair:* Thea Gaudette

*Vice-Chair:* Bob McNary

*Secretary:* Bruce Webster

*Treasurer:* Jeremy Grip

*At Large:* Ellen Kurrelmeyer  
Steve Revell  
Harvey Smith

**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 Gaudette called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. She introduced our speaker, Lisa Sausville, Executive Director of Vermont's Covert Cooperator's Program. The program provides environmental education and woodlands management classes, specifically about managing for wildlife. Vermont Coverts was started by the UVM Extension in Vermont and in Connecticut at the same time. The name 'Covert' derives from an old English word meaning a thicket. Their statewide office is in Middlebury. They offer 3-day long workshops twice a year, as well as day long workshops throughout the year. Vermont Coverts was founded on the premise that sound forest management and harvesting can go hand in hand; that use of the forest resources can benefit wildlife. Management is designed to enhance wildlife habitat. The ideas conveyed in their workshops include setting goals for your property and making plans. Their mission is to educate landowners to maintain or enhance their forests. People who participate in their three day "cooperator training" program, automatically become a member of their organization. They also have a membership category of 'friends', that is, people who donate funds. Various speakers come in and talk about forest issues. They share information on the funding available for habitat management. For example, the Eclipse Program can provide funds for forest management. They share information about the many resources available to forestland owners. A County Forester and a State Forest Biologist can come to see your land. Landowners need to work with their County Forester to enter the Current Use program. There is no licensing for County Foresters in Vermont. They educate people so that they can ask good questions of their foresters. Lastly, they talk about how you can share the information you have learned with others in your community, perhaps by writing an article in their newsletter or a local paper, or doing peer to peer networking. Cooperators talk to each other about land management. Over 450 people have gone through their Cooperator Training, perhaps more, if you count couples. There will be a meeting this weekend for Addison County Cooperators.

They also offer one-day stewardship programs, on any topic people with forests are interested in, such as apple tree release and pruning, clay plain forests, estate planning, the game of logging, and more. They publish a newsletter 3-4 times a year on relevant topics, such as forest fragmentation, forest management, and restoring and improving wetland habitats. They recognize that each landowner may have different goals for their property. The organization is small, with a \$60,000 budget – 1/3 from grants, 1/3 from cooperator donations, and 1/3 from book sales and the like. They are looking for ideas for workshops and recommendations for people to participate in their training. See their website at [www.vtcovert.org](http://www.vtcovert.org).

Adam asked how much management land they have in Addison County. Lisa is currently updating the map of land affected, up to 175,000 acres statewide. They are preparing for our greatest transfer of land in Vermont history, due to Vermont's aging population. If we want to keep the land from parcelization, we need to let landowners know what they can do with the land. They are expecting a grant which will fund a summit they plan to hold a year from now, with a panel to talk about what the options are for transferring land ownership.

Ellen asked if there were opportunities for towns to participate in their programs. Lisa replied that they haven't done anything on town land, although they do walks on towns forests for community members, particularly prior to creating a community forest management plan. They mostly provide workshops to individuals from the towns. Generally, they are looking for landowners to go through the training and share it or use it somehow. It could be someone in the town who wants to do something with the town forest. The training requires a \$50 deposit to hold the space, refundable upon request at the completion of the class, or it can be turned into a donation. In the fall, it's held at Ed Kehoe Conservation Camp. In the spring, it's in Derby. It first started at Keywadin. She would be happy to host one close to Addison County. Margaret Lowe suggested Common Ground in Foxborough.

Adam asked if the landowner could manage for something other than early successions forests. Lisa answered that, yes, you can manage for particular animals or late successional, for example. They teach people that wildlife like it "messy", with downed trees and brush piles. They recommend leaving the tops of the cutting to leave the nutrients from the wood. The key is what you want to do with your property. When you manage for one species, you are managing against another, which is part of the education.

Lisa noted that Mary Dodge participated in a 3-day workshop. Mary remarked that she really enjoyed the program, and especially getting out into the forest and farms. In one situation she could see the possibilities for how to deal with invasive species. She learned a lot in three days. 80% of the forest in Vermont is in private ownership, and that speaks to the need for educating landowners. A lot of the land is in smaller parcels. 6,500 acres are lost each land from development. Some cooperators afterward offer their land to be walked through to educate others. Mary saw the progression of one forest management area to another. Mary leans toward the tree-hugger side, but she can see the value of cutting as part of good management. Lisa added that we can set succession forward or backward through silvicultural methods.

Kevin asked if they speak to town Conservation Commissions. Lisa said she would, but would need to know what they are interested in. She is trained as a wildlife biologist and enjoys being with the critters, as well as working and talking with people, to have a greater impact on the forest habitat. It's amazing how many people have forest land and haven't walked it. The workshops deal with visioning for the land – and recommends walking your property in every season, to connect with the land. It's a hands-on program, where you prune trees, for example. It's focused on thinking and doing.

Thea asked for an example of what animals you will see in difference successions. Lisa responded that bears will come around in the spring for buds, and then go back to the mountain in the colder weather. Many animals use the forest throughout all successions phases.

Elizabeth asked about the books she would recommend. Lisa responded that they give out books as part of the three day workshop. She recommended 'Working with Your Woodlands' by Molly Bailey, 'Owning and Managing Woodlands', and 'Positive Impact Forestry'. Elizabeth offered to put their website as a link on our website and Lisa agreed.

Charlie Huizenga mentioned that someone recently walked the mountains for bear habitat in Monkton. Lisa added that they can steer landowners to sources of money.

Thea asked about the bobcat study which was conducted in the Champlain Valley. It answers the question, "How do we get wildlife across the roads?" There is a big controversy about bobcats right now. Monkton is very interested in the study. The study found that the bears are going under the road at the culvert, like near the Teddy Bear Factory in Shelburne. Lisa handed out materials and offered more for the towns on request.

## **BUSINESS AGENDA:**

Thea announced a ten minute break, after which she called the business meeting to order at 8:22 pm.

### **I. Approval of Minutes:**

Thea asked for a motion on the minutes. Bob moved adoption of the Full Commission October 14 Minutes, Charlie seconded. The Minutes of the October 14 Meeting were approved as presented, with one opposition.

### **II. Executive Board Minutes:**

Thea announced that there are no Executive Board Minutes from last month because we did not have a quorum.

### **III. Treasurer's Report:**

Adam reported on our Treasurer's Report. Our balances are good. Our receivables are running ahead of our payables, as we are at the end of our Transportation year. He commented on a few items on the spreadsheets. On page 3, office computers expenditures are ahead, as Kevin and Adam needed new computers. Adam noted that his efficiency is greatly improved as a result. Safety expenses on page two are up, because we bought additional, tubeless traffic counters. VTrans contracted with us to do traffic counts on the State road system, but since decided not to do it. We also got a new GPS, which we can use on the ACTR study – putting ACTR map data on Google maps.

Ellen asked if the Commission is qualified to participate in the Beehive Health Plan. Adam doesn't know for sure. Our health plan costs did go up last year. Bob moved acceptance of the Treasurer's Report, Fred seconded, and the acceptance of the Treasurer's Report passed unanimously.

#### **IV. Committee Reports:**

**Act 250/248:** Ellen reported on the Act 250 Committee. New Applications: On October 30, the State of Vermont Agency of Transportation Operations Division of the Aviation Program applied for an Act 250 permit amendment to install a perimeter fence at the Middlebury State Airport. Approvals or Denials: On October 22, the District 9 Environmental Commission issued a permit to 103 Pantan Road, LLC authorizing the Permittee to construct a 60x125' warehouse addition to an existing commercial building on Pantan Road in the Vergennes Industrial Park. On the same date, they issued a permit to HV 2005, Inc. (Housing Vermont) to construct a 25 unit senior housing building and associated infrastructure and subdivide a parcel into 3 lots on Armory Lane in Vergennes. On October 30, they issued an administrative permit to the Snyder Middlebury, LLC to change lot V26 from the construction of one single family house to one duplex n the Middlebury South Village development off of Creek Road in Middlebury.

**Brownfields:** Jeremy reported on the Brownfields Committee. They had a parcel from their consultant firm on the next phase examination of contaminants on that site. After some discussion, they approved \$18,000 for the review. They hope to results will be available. They also approved a submission from CPS Engineering consulting for examination of the pre-American Legion parcel for some ordinary problems. There is some history of leakage from the boilers. It is now owned by the High School. There are potentially asbestos ceiling tiles and mercury contamination.

**Energy:** Bob reported on the Energy Committee. The Energy Committee held a meeting on November 6. They reviewed their recent outreach presentation on Water Reclamation and discussed plans for monthly programs through May 2010. This included plans to distribute Energy Saving Products free of charge at our presentations. The Committee reviewed in detail and made final changes to the ARRA EECBG Application. They are working diligently to be shovel-ready as they wait for the funds to be available. The Biomass Study Final Report in available for review at the office. Due to its length and cost of copying, they asked that you return the copies you borrow when you are done reading the report. Elizabeth added that it will be available on our website. The Renewable Energy Vermont (REV) Conference was held on October 28 and 29. It continues to grow and improve in content. Six hundred plus attended this year. Our next outreach program is on Thursday, December 10 at 7 pm on Residential, Commercial and Industrial Wood Boilers. The presenters are Basil Stetson and Roger Wallace. Bob asked Ellen Kurrelmeyer to enlighten us about the LED

multi-colored holiday lights on her building. She said that her new LED lights were chosen because they look just like her old lights, but are much more energy efficient. She keeps them burned all night if there is fog, snow or rain. By replacing them with LED lights, the watts went from 1,350 watts to 30 watts. It will make a difference in her energy usage, plus the lights last much longer. They usually replace 50% of the lights every year. She bought them on-line from Bronners Christmas Wonderland. They seem as bright from across the road, but they don't look as bright close up. Fred added that Middlebury will be adding a round-about near Two Brothers with 82 watt LED lighting - 22 on the bridge and 14 on the round-about.

**Local Government:** The Committee meets next Monday at 7:30 pm at the Vergennes City Hall to review their Municipal Development Plan. Elizabeth is mailing her Review and the Plan and maps tomorrow.

**Natural Resources:** Kevin reported that the Natural Resources Committee did not meet last month, but they have a meeting planned the third week in November.

**Strategic Planning:** Fred reported that the Strategic Planning Committee did not meet this past month due to the Champlain Bridge closing. Their next meeting is on November 17 at 7:30 a.m.

**TAC:** Bob reported that the TAC did not have a meeting last month. The next meeting is scheduled for next Wednesday.

## **V. Joint Partners Report:**

1. Adam reported that he is working on getting out information about the Champlain Bridge, although it is not good news.
2. Bob asked new Commission members to introduce themselves. They are: Pat Peters from Middlebury, James Maroney from Leicester, and Chad Chamberlain from Goshen.

## **VI. Delegate/Staff Recognition:**

Adam reported on the staff activity highlights. Elizabeth has been working on the EECBG grant applications in collaboration with our Energy Committee and staff members. She has received many calls from towns who are interested in the programs we will be offering, once we receive our funding. Elizabeth and two Energy Committee members actively participated in the Renewable Energy Vermont Conference in Burlington, which was very informative. She also noted that if you have recommendations for information that you would like to see posted on our website, send them to her in an email to [egolden@sover.net](mailto:egolden@sover.net).

Tim spent the first week of November attending the IAEM conference in Orlando and will be attempting to put together a two- hour presentation/class for town officials on financial recovery from disasters. That was the class he took for two days last weekend and will focus on how to get the most out of FEMA funds by knowing some of the rules in advance. If they know what to expect, local officials can beat the nationwide average reimbursement from 60% to 80 or 90%. The data has yet to be determined.

Kevin replaced Adam's and his own computer and transferred all files and settings. He is also setting up a new server to create more web storage and better online mapping capabilities. He also assisted the Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative with water quality outreach meetings in Weybridge, Bristol and New Haven. Kevin added that the next meeting is November 18 – for the Town of Ferrisburgh. Other meetings are planned for Middlebury, Ripton, Monkton, Starksboro, Lincoln, Middlebury, Cornwall and Salisbury, but Kevin will not be attending them all.

Rick has devoted much of the month to the Champlain Bridge closing issue and is coordinating information for citizens, businesses, legislators and VTrans.

Adam highlighted the work he has been doing with the Town of Orwell. The Town received a Municipal Planning grant last year to create a State Designated Village Center and to rewrite its Land Use Regulations. Last month it received its Village Center Designation, which makes businesses within the district eligible for State tax credits to help redevelop commercial buildings, and its Planning Commission also held its hearing on the amended Land Use Regulations. He also reported on the Champlain Valley Bridge. He distributed a summary by HNTB and wrote a summary about what we, the COC and ACOEC have done to get information out to the public, which is available on our website.

Pauline is closing out the books.

## **VII. Old Business:**

1. **Energy Program Expansion** – Elizabeth reviewed the Work Plan for the ARRA EECBG \$80,000 application. She explained that this money will be used primarily to fund her time on a variety of ongoing, expanded energy related work that the Energy Committee has been planning to do for many years. Some of this work has been started without specific funding, by the overall ACRPC DHCA funding. Now that funding is available specifically for energy conservation, efficiency and renewable energy work, she can expand her energy programs and projects. This funding is in addition to the \$153,700 in the previous grant application, as well as the third pot of energy funds offered to towns on a competitive basis from the Federal Government, through the State of Vermont.

Under this grant, she will be assisting towns with energy planning, developing conservation strategies, establishing an energy usage baseline upon which to measure the energy savings of their programs, and helping town manage their other energy grants. This complements the activity under the \$153,700 grant which funds audits of potential energy savings and renewable energy at municipal buildings, and provides technical assistance to towns in applying for grants to implement the retrofits and installation of renewable energy technologies. In addition, there is funding to expand our outreach programs and hand out energy saving materials to the public, as well as offer community fluorescent light bulb exchanges.

Fred Dunnington asked what will happen when the funds end. Elizabeth answered that she will be working on applying for additional energy funding to continue this work, once she has made it through the initial whirlwind of work at the outset. He asked if she will be doing other planning work, as this looks like a full time job. She answered that the funding from the two grants combined would, indeed, take up a lot of her time, but not all of her time. She will still continue to staff the Full Commission Meetings, write our newsletter and website, and handle requests from towns for assistance with their planning and zoning questions. She will not be doing any Town Plan revision work in the coming year, except perhaps a small amount of work with Shoreham, as DHCA Municipal Planning Grant funding has disappeared. As MPG funding went down, energy funding came around, not coincidentally, but because of the economic crisis, which the ARRA EECBG funding is meant to address. Bob added that the \$80,000 grant covers two years. Elizabeth added that the \$153,700 grant covers three years.

2. **Crown Point Bridge Update** – Adam reported on the latest news about the bridge. He handed out an Executive Summary from HNTB, which is a safety assessment and recommendation to reduce risk by razing the bridge in a controlled manner, eliminating the risk of sudden, potentially catastrophic bridge failure, and constructing a new bridge immediately thereafter on the existing site. There will be a PAC meeting next week. PAC is the committee that was formed a year ago to look at all the options for the bridge. Representatives from the Agency of Transportation and local communities will attend, and Jim Harris, who has been working out of our office part time, will speak at the meeting. Bob McNary commented that, if they plan to tear down the bridge, that is a good plan. Charlie Huizenga asked what the story is on the temporary bridge. Adam responded that VTrans is working at keeping the Ti ferry available as long as weather permits. VTrans issued a press release to that effect. They abandoned any temporary bridge plans. Fred asked if there was a plan for a ferry. Adam responded that yes, within 100 feet of the bridge, but it's shallow, so they need to dredge or build a long pier. Bob added that one idea was to anchor a barge. They are doing archeological work now to prepare for January, when the weather shuts down the ferry. Adam added that they recognize that time is of the essence. Bob

added that, to get Federal dollars, we have to go through all the hoops. Fred recalled that there used to be a toll on the bridge. He suggested that we could use a design-build firm to get it done more quickly. The faster they build the bridge, the more money they get, as an incentive. They learned this lesson in the construction of the Middlebury Bridge. Bob asked if people would go for that. Fred responded that it can work if the State offers financing at a reasonable cost. The largest expense is in the piers. A suspension bridge with the fewest piers is cheaper to build. It's not rocket science. Thea asked Adam to keep us posted on the bridge issue.

#### **VIII. New Business:**

1. **Programs for upcoming meetings** – Adam reported that he has programs planned as follows: December – Legislators (prior to the session); January – VCRD's Future of Vermont Study; and February – Climate Changes, specific to Vermont. He asked for ideas for future programs. He asked if the Commissioners would be interested in meeting at the Bridge Restaurant for the December meeting to support the restaurant during this difficult time. Perhaps we could purchase a sandwich for each of the Commissioners out of our budget. Bob suggested that the restaurant has a configuration of booths which would make it difficult to have a meeting. Kent added that it holds 40 people, which is more than adequate capacity. Adam will find out if we can get a fixed price for a light meal. Elizabeth suggested a light, holiday themed buffet. Margaret asked if we could provide transportation to the restaurant. Adam will ask Jim Moulton (ACTR) about a bus there from Middlebury.

#### **IX. Member's Concerns/Information:**

1. **Middlebury Bridge** – Fred reported that there will be some big beams delivered by truck to the site of the bridge from November 19 through the 24 which will impact traffic congestion. He expects that many people will congregate nearby to see what's going on, in spite of any suggestions to the contrary. They must build a jump bridge to carry the beams over the water to put into place. They have driven the piles and put in temporary rocks to hold a crane. There is an exhibit at The Sheldon Museum on the area.

#### **X. Adjournment:**

Charlie moved to adjourn the meeting; Margaret seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Elizabeth Golden