

Meeting Minutes
Addison County Regional Planning Commission
Wednesday, December 9, 2009

The ACRPC December Meeting was held at the ACRPC offices on December 9, 2009 with Thea Gaudette, Chair, presiding.

ROLL CALL:

Addison:

Bridport: Andrew Manning
Ed Payne

Bristol:

Cornwall: Mary Dodge
Ralph Teitscheid

Ferrisburgh: Bob McNary

Goshen:

Leicester: James Maroney

Lincoln:

Middlebury: Fred Dunnington
Pat Peters

Monkton: Thea Gaudette
Charles Huizenga

New Haven:

Orwell: Clyde Park

Panton:

Ripton:

Salisbury: Bryan Jones

Shoreham:

Starksboro:

Vergennes:

Waltham:

Weybridge:

Whiting: Ellen Kurrelmeyer

CITIZEN INTEREST REPRESENTATIVES:

Addison County Farm Bureau:

Addison County Economic Development Corp:

Otter Creek Audubon Society:

Otter Creek Natural Resources:

Addison County Chamber of Commerce:

Margaret Lowe

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 7:45 p.m. Adam Lougee introduced our speakers, Legislators Steve Maier, Diane Lanpher, Willem Jewett, Will Stevens, Betty Nuovo, and Mike Fisher, who have joined us for a discussion on issues concerning transportation, land use planning, school consolidation, healthcare and the overall state of the budget, as well as what the legislature expects to take up this session. Adam asked them to speak about their committee and what they are doing.

Betty Nuovo spoke about Vermont Yankee. The legislature wants to get more of our energy sources from renewable resources. The two electric companies are working for nine months on what they will buy. We still don't know about the 3.5 billion it will cost. They also plan to study what the Agency of Natural Resources does, in detail.

Steve Maier spoke about our budget. Last year, our revenues did not drop, but they had dropped over the last several years to a very low number. We are at revenues equal to 2005. Yet, our expenditures are going up. In the case of government, the needs for your services go up during a recession, while the revenues go down, so it is doubly challenging. We will work on putting a balance budget together this year.

Steve is tracking health care reform in Washington, D.C. It will have wide ranging impacts on the reform initiatives we have already put in place. He hopes it will be positive than negative, and provide health care to our citizens. And also, we need to lower the rise in health care spending, which in part has driven us to where we are in the economic terms. We spent 20% of our income on healthcare, one of the greatest expenses that we have. It's a reasonable and serious question as to how we can bring down the costs.

Will gave some budget information. Over the past 2 years, our actions have reduced programs by \$2 million, \$26 of new revenue, and \$1.6 million in Federal dollars. We are facing this year another \$140-150 million in budget "problems". It feels hard to keep reducing the budget. He sits in the judiciary committee, which was given a \$1.2 million budget cut. It's one of three branches of government. We have to be careful philosophically that we maintain our adherence to our form of government. The legislature sets the spending amounts, and funds the judiciary, so the question is how much is enough to still deliver justice and meet their constitutional requirements. The concept of a unified judiciary came out of the proposal. It saves \$1.2 million at the county level, and \$1.2 million at the state level. It would totally change the probate judge system, taking side judge authority away, and reducing it to 5 super judges. They will spend at least a month looking at other options.

He is also a school board member, and he has been working on the consolidation efforts. He participated in the Salisbury-Leicester talks, which had promise, and it was disappointing to see it fail. I don't believe the legislature will tell which districts to consolidate. He is advocating for the Department of Education to be directed to go out to towns to assist those who are considering this with resources. It is a complicated thing for school boards to take up and they get little support.

Diane Lanpher talked about consolidation in District 3 which she represents. The decrease in student enrollment and the budget themselves are making for a cooler discussion. Although they do a lot of what consolidation is about, moving to one board is hard. It's like giving two people half a vote. She

would like to think that anyone on that school board represents everyone in that district. It will come up for a vote this March.

We have to find \$104 million to cut out of our Budget, in addition to the \$100 million we already cut. Transportation – Going into this session, we have the big issue of the Champlain Bridge. Statewide, she was asked to write up some of the goals and objectives for this session. They are meeting tomorrow for a pre-session discussion of their plans for the coming session. She wants to see us examine the rest of the bridges in this state. We are lucky we didn't have loss of life at the Champlain Bridge. She has been talking with the Structures Department of VTrans. She has a list of every state bridge inspection report, which will be helpful. There are 2,700 bridges to look at. The Champlain Bridge is not a Vermont inspected bridge. We co-own it, and must co-maintain it. How many others are not in the report? Roughly 17 bridges in New Hampshire and Quebec are missing, and we need to look at them. A few weeks ago, we were possibly not having our bridge in Addison County, but now it is. It will take two years to build the new bridge. The existing bridge will be down before Christmas. The Public Advisory Committee (PAC) are meeting this Friday and will see a preview of the new bridge. They will review and work with the design. This Saturday in Ti is the all-day presentations to the public starting at 9:30, 12:30 and 3:30 at Lachute, 132 Monponte Street is Fort Ticonderoga. In between, one can review the design and give public input. On December 14, the voting members of the PAC will pick a design. Then the design team will work on the full design. The design team is HTB, a consultant out of Connecticut. The NYDOT has an updated daily log of activities on their website.

Besides the transportation issue, the economic impact of the bridge closing is daunting. There will be economic relief for the businesses affected by the closing. NY has a couple of programs. The ferries provide close to normal traffic. There are people have been laid off. For every day they are laid off, they are getting further behind, possibly losing their home. The first relief was opening the ferries for free. New Yorkers can't get to their Vermont jobs. They live in New York State because it's less expensive to live there. Many have little money to survive this crisis. Ralph suggests they provide cash relief for individuals who are affected by this crisis. Bob asked that, in the permitting process, design and implementation, how badly of an exposure is this to appeal. It has been under review for many years. The crisis has helped in the permitting process. It's amazing how quickly the process is progressing, due to the amount of pressure.

Will added that, as the process continues, an appeal is unlikely. Everybody is at the table on the Public Advisory Committee. The fact that it is a replacement at the same site, with the same roads, makes it less challengeable. Betty added that fewer than 3% of projects are appealed, and not all go all the way. Bob suggested they get it done and don't let it linger; that they close out the design and permitting process. Diane expects that the bridge will be gone and a design chosen before the New Year. Will said they have been running a defense against the concept of a permanent ferry rumor. They took action to crush the rumor. There was value, in that it allows us to get the strongest statement of support in the immediate rebuilding of the bridge from Welch, NY, Senators and House Speakers and President Pro-tem, Transportation Chair and the entire Addison County delegation. There is only one solution to this problem, and that is restoring the capacity of the bridge 24/7. Margaret asked if a bike lane will be provided. Diane will be handling that. Fred congratulated the delegation for all they have done. Steve said that Diane has been their leader in the effort.

Will Stevens is on the House Ag Committee again. Their scope of work continues to support a viable ag sector in the State of Vermont. There is little they can do about the dairy. The VSJF is developing a statewide food system, within a ten year time frame. The final report will come to the legislature in 2011. The AC food summit was held yesterday, to get information to build a database on the existing system. Commodity (dairy) is 85%, 15% is relational ag, where the end user is in close proximity to the producer, anything that does not involve the shipment of milk to a plant.

Last year, as part of the budget deal, a group was formed to make recommendations to the legislature to raise the exception to 5 acres on current use, change the tax, increase the property transfer tax, and a surcharge to bring it up to the 21st Century. The \$25 fee would bring electronic filing to the program. This represents a substantial change to the program. If you are enrolled, you can opt out without penalty. VT Farm Bureau, Land Trust, TNC, the Women's, and Audubon and others were involved. Kevin asked if there would be a public meeting, like there was four years ago. That was about what was happening. Now it's a budget crisis. That was not so long ago that it won't be reviewed again. Ralph asked what the end result of these changes would be. Less land would be enrolled in current use, most land will be potentially developed, that's up to the land owner, and the budget will have \$1.6 million to the good. Anything else is speculation. Part of the discussion for me depends on your goals. If you goal is keeping people working on land, versus a way to stop development, versus a way to keep open space, each goal means a different program. If a discussion is made all about dollars, a bad decision will be made. The program goals need to be discussed for a good long-term outcome. It will be in the public eye to get input. If anyone is interested in weighing in on this or any issue, talk to these representatives.

Fred asked if there is a strong pressure to get people out of the program. Will says that is not what is driving the program. The easy out would generate more development. Whiting, Benson, Orwell and Shoreham came up with a surcharge on property enrolled in the program. If we charged a surtax, it wouldn't make a substantive change, and it would buy a year to look at the program. Margaret asked how much the current use program costs. Will answered that it costs \$30 million each year, and the legislature decided to find \$1.6 million in savings.

Mike Fisher is in the Human Services Committee. The Agency of Human Services is about half of the State budget and employees, half of that is health care. It is tasked with the welfare of Vermonters, who are having a hard time. We have 7% unemployment, underemployment, and what does that mean in our community. We are seeing more people coming in to food shelves and for other assistance that have never asked for help before. It's pretty severe for many people. Ralph asked if Vermont can borrow money easily. Vermont borrows as much as it can and still has good credit, about 71 million a year. Ralph suggested that if Vermont has good credit, you have to make a decision whether this is a temporary situation or if Vermont is going down on a permanent slide. If income will be increasing, then it seems to me that a short term loan to solve these temporary problems would be good sense, instead of taking so much time to cut so many programs. Mike responded that the question has been asked. There are a number of fiscal train wrecks ahead of us. You mention giving money to people who are having a hard time. There is about \$8 million earmarked to low income families with children we will lose at the end of Federal Fiscal year 2011. This is Federal money which comes with all kinds of strings. A creative approach on how to make it

work has real opportunity. We will have to work with private entities. For example, we can ask companies to offer a discount. He wants to give a \$200 voucher to children to buy clothing at local stores who will give a 20% discount.

Diane added that the Federal government will look at earmarked funds that have not been spent, will be scrutinized. In transportation, she is making sure that the earmarked funds stay in the corridor. If we should get grants, along with being able to use our Jeffer's earmark, there is a lot we can do in our western corridor. If we don't get all of our grants or Jeffer's earmark, and some of them require state matching funds, which we are not always in a place to get it. Mike adds that everyone will be angry at us. We are going to scale back some basic services that government offers. We are going to get as much of the funds from the Feds that we can, but even if we borrow, we still have tough decisions to make.

Bob asked, if we have a \$200 million short fall over the next two fiscal years, what is the plan for addressing this? When will the powers be understand that paychecks for life retirement situations are not sustainable. They are \$400 million in debt. Diane responds that it's going to be a dramatic problem. The teachers' funds are not sustainable. Mike adds that "for life" is the longer time frame than it used to be. In terms of the plan, we knew this was coming, we made \$160 million in cuts and raised extra revenue in the past use. There are many items to look at and reduce expenses. The administration is asking for an 8% reduction as well. The plan is to keep cutting, as we have been. It goes through committees and to the Senate. We are asked to trust that the process will work again. Mike says that the mental health systems (Addison County counseling service and others around the state) need a \$20 cut. The cost of keeping stable someone with an acute psychiatric illness is the same as one day at a hospital community. If we don't keep people stable, they will enter our hospitals, at a dramatic increase in cost.

Steve said about retirement, that there will be a recommendation soon. Bob asked if there will be a restructuring or a band-aid. It will be for those close to the end, there will be a different system for newer teachers.

Richard asked: One of the things that goes on is seeking services from other states. Why are we spending money on consultants who are outside our state? Why can't we hire local consultants? Mike responded that he apologizes if he wasn't responsive, but he wants to answer our questions. The bottom line is to think about where our money is going. Steve added that you are right. It is a choice you make every day, little by little. Everything but the big red crane at the bridge site is local sourced. On the other side, bidding projects usually require the low bid.

Thea thanks our Representatives for coming to speak with us tonight, and called for a brief recess.

BUSINESS MEETING:

Thea called the Business Meeting to order.

- I. **Approval of Minutes: November 11, 2009** – Thea asked for a motion on the Minutes. Andrew Manning moved the adoption of the November 11, 2009 Minutes; Bob McNary

- II. **Executive Board Minutes: November 24, 2009** - Thea explained that the Executive Board Minutes are provide for information only, and asked if anyone had any questions. Andrew noted a correction that was needed on the bottom of page two. Thea acknowledged the correction.
- III. **Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements** – Adam handed out the Treasurer's Report dated December 9, 2009 and the Financial Statement for Years Ended June 30, 2009 and 2008. He reported that revenues are at 30% of the budget and expenses are at 38%, but that includes all of the expenses through November, but not the expenses through November. Bob suggested that we include the Treasurer's Report in our agenda packets, so we can go over it before the meeting. Adam responded that the timing is such that the numbers wouldn't be as timely if you get them in advance, because our hours and expenses need to go through Pauline to produce the Report. He would have to provide two Treasurer's Reports each month, which would be confusing, and create extra work for Pauline. Ellen recalled when we did offer two Treasurer's Report each month, and agreed that it was cumbersome and confusing. Bob rescinded his request.

Jim Maroney asked about the Municipal Dues. He stated that it looks like one town hasn't paid. Adam replied that, yes, that is likely what has happened. Thea asked that we defer discussion of the Dues for New Business. Jim also noted that it looks like there is a lot more to utilize under the Lake Champlain Byways Grant. Adam responded that this fall we did a fair amount of work, with six new towns joining the Lake Champlain Byway. We are rewriting the plan to incorporate them. The Transportation board formally adopts the towns into the Byway this Friday. We expect to go out this winter and spring to develop a corridor management plan for those towns, and expect to spend all of those funds in this fiscal year.

Ed asked about the rent. Adam replied that the rent is always ahead of the budget (the same with insurance) and we catch up by the end of the year. Charlie moved that we accept the Treasurer's Report as presented; Bob seconded. The Motion carried unanimously.

IV. **Committee Reports:**

Act 250 – Ellen Kurrelmeyer reported that they had two new applications. On November 13, 2009 Moriah South, LLC and Edmund and Melissa Johnson applied for an Act 250 permit to demolish an existing dwelling and build a new 5,500 sq. ft. commercial building for an animal hospital and physical therapy practice. The property is located off of Monkton Road in Bristol. On November 20, 2009 the District 9 Environmental Commission issued a notice that it would treat the application as a minor application and not hold a hearing unless, on or before December 16, 2009 a party requested a hearing. She added that no one has requested a hearing.

On November 25, 2009 Lewisburg, LLC submitted an application to renovate an existing three unit multifamily apartment building located at 89-91 Main Street in Vergennes. The renovation will create a 4th dwelling unit in a currently uninhabitable area of the building. She added that it will be treated as a minor application. There were no approvals or denials.

Brownfields – Adam reported that the committee met last month and approved going forward with the MUHS Legion Fields building. The consultant has created a Quality Assurance Plan and we will begin testing shortly. They also approved the Shade Roller Mill testing, and will work out what that will be.

Energy – Bob reported that the committee continued to work on planning and improving our monthly outreach programs. Their next program is tomorrow night at 7 pm. The subject will be “Residential, Commercial and Industrial Wood Boiler.” The initial applications from towns for the EECBG were due in Montpelier yesterday at 4 pm. Elizabeth assisted thirteen towns in their efforts to share in the \$4.8 million of Federal ARRA funds. He expects the award list to surface by the end of December of this year. The comprehensive applications are due February 23, 2010. The committee continues to develop strategies that will support our towns in this effort. Elizabeth will provide technical assistance on the applications.

The committee reviewed CVPS’s application to construct a 46 kW line from New Haven to Middlebury and found no significant problems. A letter of support has already been sent from the committee, and no further action is needed. VPIRG produced the Clean Energy Guide Book, a resource guide for financing, grant opportunities, and tax credits for installing energy saving and renewable projects. We expect to receive more copies for your information shortly. Jeremy and Elizabeth attended the VECAN Conference last Saturday. They said it was super! Mark your 2010 calendar for Saturday, March 13 for the Green Economy (formerly Energy) Expo to be held at Middlebury Union High School from 9-4. It’s going to be bigger than ever, as the Steering Committee is adding Local Food and Economy workshops and exhibitors to the event. Our next committee meeting will be held on Friday, January 8 at noon.

Natural Resources – Kevin asked a committee member to make a report. Mary Dodge reported that we are working on air quality recommendations. We have one more section to do and approval of the section. She hope the Natural Resources section of our Regional Plan to be coming for review by the commission in the near future. Ed added that we skipped the October meeting because so many members were interested in the Champlain Bridge presentations. So, we are meeting twice in January and February to try to be able to wrap things up in time, hopefully before Annual meeting.

Strategic Planning – Fred reported that they met on December 17. They reviewed the game plan for visiting towns. The list was divided up among the staff. They reviewed the methods about what we are doing for our towns. The objective is to get out before Town Meeting. Strategically, we want to make contact particularly to towns that aren’t represented here. They plan to meet next Tuesday. Adam has the minutes, and he will send them to Fred and the Committee. Adam added that staff members will be contacting each of the delegates of the towns, and requesting that the delegates set up the meeting with their Select Boards. The delegates and staff will meet with the Select Boards. Adam asked every delegate or alternate from each town to be prepared to go to their Select Board

with a member of our staff to talk about what ACRPC does, and to help us establish the connection with their Select Boards. Staff members will be calling each delegate to set up the meetings. Staff is putting together the program.

Transportation Advisory – Bob reported that they met on the third Wednesday in November. Jim Harris and John Zicconi of the DOT spent an hour on the details on how we got to where we are on the bridge and the basic plans to straighten out the situation. They finalized prioritization for new capital programs for town bridges. Addison County candidates are: New Haven – River Road (Nash Farm Bridge), Middlebury – Battell Bridge over Otter Creek, Lincoln – Truchean Bridge over the New Haven River, and they added Vergennes – the bridge at the power dam over Route 22A. Bob clarified that these are all town (not State owned) bridges. Ralph asked about the bridge over Otter Creek by Route 125 – the Lemon Fair Bridge. Adam said that it is on everyone’s list. That is a state bridge. Margaret wanted to clarify if these are bridges that the towns are responsible for taking care of. Adam replied that the State provides funding to the towns to maintain these bridges. Being put on the list gives the bridges State priority for funding. Bob added that they are prioritizing the worst bridges that get the most use, and hope to get money. The ones he read off are the top priority, as recommended by the TAC. Kevin added that the State doesn’t change our priority list, so it has weight. Bob said that the TAC is now, however, the only power to be. Lamoureux-Dickenson was picked by the selection committee to do the Route 22A and Pantown Road intersection study in Vergennes. The study is to determine what actions can be taken to alleviate the traffic congestion at that intersection. The committee voted to reconsider the Route 125 study in Ripton, because of major concerns from the towns of Ripton and Middlebury. Also, Sue Clark from VTrans stated that VTrans has no money or desire to build any new roads.

V. **Joint Partners Report** – Adam will get together this Friday with ACCOC and ACOED to help the legislators prioritize the parameters for the program to set up assistance for the businesses and people affected by the Champlain Bridge closing. Ralph asked if this is for individuals. Adam replied that yes, he believe it would also assist individuals.

VI. **Delegate/Staff Recognition/Project Highlights**

Adam asked the new Delegates to introduce themselves. Bryan Jones, representing Salisbury, told the Commission that he has a background in architecture. He lived in Salisbury his whole life. He is very interested in planning. It was recommended to him that he get experience working with the regional planning commission. Fred congratulated him for stepping up. He suggested that we will find ways to use his experience.

Adam read the staff monthly project narratives. Elizabeth has been working on assisting towns with their EECSBG grant applications. Thirteen towns in Addison County have submitted applications, most of them for Energy Efficiency Retrofits of municipal buildings and schools. Many of these towns will be doing an Energy Audit under our EECSBG Program Budget, in order to have detailed information on the work which will provide the most energy savings. This information will also provide technical backup for their Comprehensive

Application, which is due to DPS by February 23. She will assist these towns with the Comprehensive Applications as well.

Kevin has worked a substantial part of the month setting-up the new office server - installing Apache, MySQL, PostgreSQL, PHP, Tomcat and Geoserver in preparation for moving over the existing data from the old server. There is still more work and testing to be done. He also spent some time on the DOE energy grant submittal, the Metropolitan Planning Organizations regional transportation study and wrote a draft Air Quality section for the Natural Resource Committee's review.

Tim would like you to know that the Addison County Emergency Planning Committee will be meeting each of the Select Boards in the region over the winter and distributing start-up toolkits for Town emergency operation centers.

Rick would like you to know that the Champlain Bridge PAC will be meeting this Friday at the Ilsley library all day to discuss the design for the new Lake Champlain Bridge. If anyone has ideas regarding bridge features or other issues, Rick asks that you send them to him. He has been compiling a list of people's good ideas and will be sharing them with the PAC. Also, this Saturday, December 12th VTrans and New York DOT will be holding three public informational sessions in Ticonderoga NY on the design of the new bridge. Rick will also be attending at least the first of those sessions, so if you have questions or concerns, but cannot make the meeting yourself, please speak with Rick.

Adam received permission from the Executive Board a couple of months ago to look of a new staff member. He has held a couple of interviews and has a candidate that he thinks will work out great for the commission. She has a landscape architecture and planning background. If hired, she will probably work $\frac{3}{4}$ time and focus on grants outreach and support to towns, helping to implement one of our main strategic planning goals, graphic support for all of our projects and other Land use related functions.

Pauline reported that now that the audit is in final form, she will be closing last year's books.

VII. Old Business:

1. Crown Point Bridge – Adam, the demo team was chosen. They are moving into the greenhouse next to the bridge. Jim Maroney added that the ferry backwash area successful blasted well. They were afraid they would have to build long docks, but were fortunate that they didn't have to. Ralph asked about the muck. Bob asked if the ferry project and docks are on a 24/7 work schedule. Adam doesn't not believe they are. Ellen asked if they will be kept running. Adam said that their agreement runs through the end of Dec the Ti Ferry agreement with VTrans. I'm not sure how much. The Charlotte Essex Ferry will be kept open as long as

they can. Adam added that they are hoping to get it done by the end of December. The new ferry should also be free, Bob added.

2. Adam brought up that talking about the weather for today's meeting, Kevin and Tim came up with a policy that he will bring up at the next Executive Board meeting. If the National Weather Service makes a warning for Addison County at noon for an evening meeting, or 7 am for a daytime meeting, the meeting would be postponed. That way, everyone could look up the service by themselves, to take the guesswork out of it. Ralph recommends a link. Kevin added that it was only an advisory today. Fred added that 11,000 people were without power today.
3. Adam recognized Charlie Huizenga, who will be going to operate the shelter tonight for people without power. Ralph recommended that we organize a way to get people with generators, but who have power, to volunteer the use of their equipment for a day or two to people who need it. Charlie responded that every generator has different plugs. Bob added that some people loan generators that don't come back in good condition. Kevin said we had a plan years ago for generators for each municipality. Charlie added that most towns have generators in municipal buildings. Fred added that the Town of Middlebury gymnasium has a space, with a big screen TV.

VIII. New Business:

1. Adoption of the Municipal Dues Rates for 2010/2011 - Adam said that a Proposed Municipal Assessments were in the agenda packets. The last column is the Executive Board recommendations, for raising the dues by 3 cents per capita, a little more than \$800 cumulatively over the entire region. Bob added that we are losing people. Adam said that we use the Census Bureau projections, which were projected higher than expected. They are now revising the numbers downward. Bob moved acceptance, who seconded? Jim asked: that will give us \$900, what % is this of our budget? Adam says less than 1%. If we left it level, because the census figures are going backwards, we would be going backwards in the amount of due we collect. So, the Executive Board elected to increase it; it's a little something. When is the due date? July 1st. We set it now so the towns can get it in their budget for Town Meeting. Bob added that in the last fiscal year we have had two instances where our funding has been cut, and in all probability it will be cut again soon. Adam expects another cut in our DHCA funds of about \$16,000 out of \$200,000 we got next year. Margaret asked if that means we will have a smaller budget next year. Adam isn't sure. DHCA is traditionally our largest revenue source, but if we bring in other programs, the budget could increase. But we are expecting an 8% cut in the DHCA funding, our largest funding source. The Municipal Dues Rates were unanimously adopted.
2. Vote concerning the City of Vergennes request for Regional Approval of their new Municipal Development Plan – Thea reported that their Plan is in compliance. The Local Government Committee had an interesting and lively discussion with the Vergennes Planning Commission. The Committee is recommending that we vote approval of the Vergennes Plan. Ralph asked if the Commissions were given a copy of the Plan. Thea responded that

traditionally the Local Government Committee recommends approval. Jim asked, “What are the consequences to the town if we don’t approve it?” Thea responded that it keeps the Town out of potential revenue sources from DHCA and also gives the Town Plan less standing in Act 250 and Act 248 hearings. Also, in the Downtown Designation Process, added Fred. It is generally a good practice to gain this recognition. Thea moved the approval of the Vergennes Municipal Development Plan; Fred seconded. Jim asked if there are towns that don’t have approval. Thea answered that this is the last step in the process. The Planning Commission recommends the Plan to the Select Board. Our approval is to make sure the statutory requirements are met and gives the Committee a Review Report. Ralph asked that, for anything we are asked to vote on, that we give the delegates something to look at, instead of basing the vote on other people’s recommendations. Thea added that the Review could be available on our website. Jim agreed with Ralph that, if it’s that important to towns, we need to review it. Adam said he will make sure the Review is on the website and he has the Plan and review with him to look at. Elizabeth will put it on the website. Ralph asked who writes the Review. Adam responded that staff writes it. Elizabeth said that she was one of the staff who reviewed the Plan. Fred added that the real work of writing and adopting the Plan is a local effort. Our work is approving the Plan. There has been great deference to the community to respecting their work. The legislature asked the RPC to review the Town Plans. Ellen added that the Plan has to conform to the Regional Plan and adjacent town plans.

Ralph asked if the commissioners should come into the process earlier. Thea said that we can let the commissioners know as soon as the town asks for approval and we share the Review with the commission. The E Board can come up with a process. Ralph added that the towns may not want to hear recommendations from this group. Adam adds “more than you know.” Jim said that he is still learning how this works. We are voting on something the Local Government Committee has reviewed without seeing it. Fred added that this Commission is like the United Nations of Addison County. This is in theory a significant role, but we defer to local control. Thea added that, historically, there are concerns that are expressed as part of the committee’s report, with great care. Charlie added that it is an ongoing issue that each town has to review and readopt its Town Plan every five years. Margaret asked about the discussion. Thea added that in some instances the meeting is brief but held open for thirty minutes to allow people to speak. In this instance, the town looked at a lot of things. There was a lot of disparity on the issues within Vergennes. Andrew added that it appeared that there were a lot of diverse opinions in the Committee in Vergennes. Fred called the question. The Motion carried, with Ralph Teitscheid and Bryan Jones abstaining.

3. Audit Report – Adam handed out five pages of the audit to everyone present and has the full audit available. The Executive Board will approve it at their next meeting. He highlighted on page one: “the financial statements...ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.” He also noted that at the bottom of page two: “Total assets increased \$36,167 from \$414,057 to \$448,222; total net assets increased \$27,763 from \$317,052 to \$344,815; operating income increased \$30,268 from (\$5,582) to \$24,686; and expenses decreased by \$91,926 or 12.38% from \$742,824 to \$650,898.” There was a question about the \$70,000 that passes through on the Middlebury Bridge funds, which Adam clarified. He also added that ACRPC likes to operate a little in the black to have cash on hand for the next year, which we

IX. There being no further business, Fred moved that we adjourn. Thea adjourned the meeting at 10:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Elizabeth Golden
Land Use and Environmental Planner