

Meeting Minutes
Addison County Regional Planning Commission
Wednesday, January 13, 2010

The ACRPC January Meeting was held at the ACRPC offices on January 13, 2010 with Thea Gaudette, Chair, presiding.

ROLL CALL:

Addison:

Bridport: Andrew Manning
Ed Payne
Mark Pumiglia

Bristol: William Sayre

Cornwall: Mary Dodge
Ralph Teitscheid

Ferrisburgh: Bob McNary

Goshen:

Leicester: James Maroney

Lincoln: Steve Revell

Middlebury: Fred Dunnington
Pat Peters

Monkton: Thea Gaudette
Charles Huizenga

New Haven: Harvey Smith
Allen Karnatz

Panton: Michael Hermann

Ripton: Jeremy Grip
Ted Dunakin

Salisbury: Bryan Jones

Shoreham:

Starksboro: Richard Warren
Jan McCleery

Vergennes:

Waltham:

Weybridge:

Whiting: Ellen Kurrelmeyer
Jonathan Heppell

Orwell:

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: 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 speaker Paul Costello. Paul distributed copies of *Imagining Vermont: Values and Vision for the Future* and shared what the Vermont Council on Rural Development found over the last several years. Paul began by speaking about the Council – which was charged by the Farm to be a neutral group to think about the future, convene State policy around rural development, at a couple of different levels. They do community visits, to rally members of a community to set goals. They help build the structure for the dialogue. They involve congressional staff, legislators, planners and citizens to look at issues that we need to rally around to find keystones we are align around. Three years ago we analyzed the structure of the planning system. Bill Sayre assisted us. Acts with community and unity, with decisions filtering up to connect to how the state functions and look at long term issues, such as energy development. What should our plans be aiming at, what do our citizens want? What values and goals do we share? Do these questions make sense to ask? It was time for that kind of conversation. A few charitable trust studies indicated that we don't build large scale strategic plans sufficiently. They designed a process and built a Board with diverse members of our community, intelligent, creative people from all aspects of our society to hear what Vermonters were saying. They had forums in every county asking key questions about what we value in Vermont, our key challenges and opportunities, long term priorities, and goals. They also asked who would not come and how could we reach them. We went to jails, leading business groups, mobile home associations, rural areas as well. They held 140 meetings with 4,000 Vermonters. They commissioned a trend analysis, from people incarcerated to the dairy income, a compendium over a 20 year period, to see the trends for the future. They had 300-400 young writers see their visions for the future. This was the most systematic and exhaustive conversation in the State's history. They digested it and came to some conclusions.

Paul skimmed the ideas in *Imagining Vermont: Values and Vision for the Future*. Six categories came up – Vermont culture, economy, youth and education, population, natural environment, working landscape: agriculture and forestry, human services, health and safety, infrastructure and energy. They discovered that Vermonters still have an identity. They have a sense of community, of volunteerism. Community involvement is being part of a community. There is a great desire to participate. There is a value of specialness in Vermont, particularly in rural Vermont. There is also a sense that it takes a long time to be accepted. There are a lot of jokes around flatlanders/newcomers. There are divisions such as social, economic, cultural, and urban/rural. Newcomers don't feel welcome and residents look at them with skepticism. We look at the challenge of the loss of youth in Vermont. We need to attract a new generation of entrepreneurs and leaders to be a vibrant community. We have to get over our feelings of divisions to work on our challenges together and for our communities to work effectively. There's a sense of pride in Vermont's' firsts, such as first against slavery, pride in our constitution and franchising women, the bottle bill and environmental protections, civil unions. Vermont tries things out and doesn't wait for the Federal government to take leadership. They stand for things and move them forward. There's a lot of pride in what we have done.

Another issue is Vermont's economy. We have a continual dialogue around land use, growth and development. It's a passionate dialogue that moves around all the time, that love of environment and community, and desire for the future of our children. They heard about advancing innovation and providing the jobs of the future; based on values and skills. We define ourselves against everyone

else. We have a “we are the core of the economy” attitude, instead of seeing the portfolio of development, pitting one part of the economy against the other. It’s not an easy place to do big development projects. We do a lot of planning against what we don’t want to happen, but little FOR economic planning. We need to design what we are for, what our best prospects are, and how we can set the conditions for the success of our economy. Look at strategic opportunities. We have a lack of an economic strategic plan; we need direction in job creation. Advancing n-state energy development, a core that connects to our identity.

Other issues of importance include: promoting downtown (village center) vitality, to avoid marginalization, how we spend our resources, and buying local. But we lack a coherent plan. How do we decide what we are for and then form a marketing message. This is more of a vision document, a call for leadership, than a planning document with answers.

Youth and education – which connects to the potential for school unifications (unified district) and unified programming, what our children will need for the future. Both the cost size and frustration about not talking about educational goals. A renewing public education campaign to look at what excellence in the 21st century will mean. Looking at the challenge at the loss of youth, our 25-35 year old population falls 40% below the national average. The young folks are missing. Well paying, satisfying jobs and a desirable cultural environment are missing. It is the personal decisions of young people to go elsewhere. We import more people of college age than we lose in Vermont, due to our tremendous educational opportunities here. How can we retain college graduates, welcome them, and integrate them into our economy. We need to find a way to hook entrepreneurs into our economy. People get a message that they are a failure for staying here. How do you make them feel that they are respected in the community. Affordability, job availability, combined with better opportunities elsewhere., and the attraction of an urban area draw our youth away from Vermont.. Some careers just aren’t available here. There is a lack of diversity of jobs and a lack of critical mass of resources.

See on-line longer version of the report and data sets. Vermonters go out of state to colleges, just as many out of state students comes to Vermont. We need to retain so many of them. A commissioner added that Vermont State College Systems lacks public funding, combined with one of the highest tuitions for residents. Only in Vermont does the VSAC system allow the dollars to go to out of state colleges.

Landscape and natural resource economy – farming, forestry, beauty, connection to nature, hike, ski, hunt in your backyard the tradition and value of that is important and threatened. This is the highest ranked value. The land and character of the land defines us as a people and the future of our agricultural economy is essential. So many people do not want to see the loss of agricultural land, or land posted, or for the land to become a park for the rich. There are challenges to agriculture – 40 groups work independently, in contra distinction to each other, and don’t add up what they do. We tend to invest in agriculture through conservation and loans, but haven’t invested in agricultural infrastructure in a significant way. We tend to look at agriculture in a crisis situation, not bringing the groups and the interests of farmers in a unified, strategic way. Jeremy asked what such a development would look like. The VSJF farm to plate program for example, would be an example. What are the integrated ways that we can develop agriculture? Expand agricultural partnerships and work together in the larger, long-term issues. Expand local food production. Diversify the agricultural economy.

Better coordination of land use planning between towns, regional coordination, and how it adds up. Act 250 and the Gibbs Commission called for agricultural land planning, which wasn't realized through Act 250. Commission of the Future of VT called for directions that weren't realized. We need to look at long term land use planning integration.

Health, transportation and public safety – there's a lot of issues. Look at Vermont seniors as a resource. Reduce incarceration in a strategic way.

Civic structure – governmental service territories and how they evolved over time. Essentially, the history of the township in Vermont and the layers of government that have developed since then are a concern. RPC, regional solid waste districts, court systems, school districts, but never embraced regional government. It's a spider web of complexity and lack of coordination. Each has its own structure. Increase efficiency by looking at coordination of civic organizations. The time and burdens are added to. It is difficult to fill all the seats. They don't feel that they don't have power. There are so many organizations that do so many things. John McClaughry's idea of shires, with some managerial efficiencies and integrate districts for democratic participation and strong civic rights, enhance civic empowerment. Issues: effectiveness of municipal government, difficulty managing the different seats of civic responsibility, and budget inefficiencies, embedded in the notion of local control, many of which aren't accountable to voters in a systematic way. Many people feel they have little power, and their work is not integrated.

Participatory democracy – how can we invite youth, second home owners and newcomers into town government? How will town meeting adjust to digital technology? Foster ongoing civic dialogue in Vermont. Like the village center store where people mix. People are getting more and more separated. People go outside their community more than before. Preserve place as center points of communities in our village centers. We hold great pride in Vermont's firsts, as well as a strong sense of community in Vermont, but we lack looking at the big picture challenges and defining strategies for long term strategic planning. We disagree on long terms issues and don't act on them in a unified way. See ourselves as a laboratory of ideas, a small scale place that can be nimble and respond quickly to change. We should use our assets and have confidence in our ability to do great things. Ellen Kurrelmeyer asked about the small scale that we value, personal government. You are saying we should impose an economy of scale. We are a small scale spread out over geography. For example, you can have breakfast with your governor or legislator, which is in opposition to your recommendation.

The NW Supervisory Union is looking at a common governance structure – is that a threat to community or a money saving opportunity to offer more, more efficiently. With a limited pool of community capital, is there a more rational way of unifying functions and responsibilities to get things done in a more unified way. We need to think this forward. Ellen – Maine unified its supervisory unions, but didn't save any money, because they had to hire middle managers to handle the larger scale. Bob McNary added that the community school is the center of the community and a hard thing to swallow. Paul said that he doesn't recommend unification, but to spur the conversation. Some people say the state could provide leadership in education. They recommend community and dialogue. Bob added that the current structure isn't sustainable. Paul added that the question is, how do we develop a sustainable structure while retaining community involvement? Another

commissioner added that sustainability is an issue of time and efficiency. We want a broad range of job opportunity, but relate it to our core. So, there is only a certain amount of range with job opportunities, while still retaining our core. We need to balance our resources indefinitely. As a small state, and separated. We're scattered around. There is a limit to the amount of growth you can create within a small state. There needs to be a balance of expansion and natural resource preservation. For our youth, education in agriculture needs to be one of our foci, as well as job creation. To keep people in the state, or attract people here, Vermont is a place with specific values, more of an idea than just a place. People who grow up in Vermonters and are taught a certain way of living may not want to continue to live that way as they become adults. You can be a Vermonter at heart without growing up in Vermont.

Ralph Teitscheid added that Cornwall has the same number of people that we had 200 years ago. Town meeting government works really well. To have outside influences come in to detract from town meeting government, to take away from peoples' feeling in having control over their resources and their destiny. Many towns are the same size, or smaller. People will feel free to speak up at town meetings. We have to see the ramifications of what we are changing. Some changes aren't positive, they can undermine the strength of our communities.

A commissioner asked – who are the key players in what we do now with this report? Paul shared this report with the legislature, those running for governor, congressional delegation, and they're working with groups in a variety of ways. They try to develop structures that come to conclusions. They believe that the combined intelligence of the people they bring together is greater than their own. Communities need to lead these conversations. They are having the conversation with the school boards association, supervisory unions, community schools, league of cities and towns, chamber of commerce, sustainable jobs fund, agricultural development corporation, agency of commerce, VSBG, and others. They help folks connect around what they find important. Ag tourism events' leaders can partner in advancing VT agriculture, so Vermont can have a seasonal calendar of VT activities, and on-line purchases. ANR, agricultural economists, and natural resource economists can plan for the future of the working landscape. They can help form strategies to advance the goals and values of the citizens they have heard from.

Alyth Hescoek asked how they got the number of poll results. They are citing phone polls. Both said similar things. Bob said many people felt they didn't have real power. Do we have the ability then, to fix things, if people can't take the reins and get things done. Paul answered that we have a long history of civic participation, so people are dedicated to working on our problems together. Bill Sayre thanked Paul for the work he has done for many years in Bristol. There is a natural tension about the competing ideas found through your work, and probably always will exist. We can agree on the importance of a natural landscape, private property, community, and industry – ideas that are in our constitution. If we get into any more detail, we have differences. Some things protecting private property rights let people feel safe and will protect their land, while others think public use is more important. Some object to their property being taken for public power projects. Thank you for identifying our issues. Promoters of any particular strategic plan will differ. Ellen added that part of the problem is that our elected delegates do not value the local officials' experience and knowledge.

BUSINESS MEETING:

Thea called the Business Meeting to order.

- I. **Approval of Minutes: December 9, 2009** – Thea asked for a motion on the Minutes. Bob McNary moved the adoption of the December 9, 2009 Minutes; Charlie Huizenga seconded. The Minutes were approved as written, with Ralph Teitscheid abstaining.
- 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. There were none.
- III. **Treasurer's Report** – Adam handed out the Treasurer's Report dated January 13, 2010. He reported that revenues are at 54% of the budget and expenses are at 46%, which is good, and we have a positive cash flow. There are a good number of account receivables. Ellen moved that we accept the Treasurer's Report as presented; Bob seconded. The Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Committee Reports:

Act 250 – Ellen Kurrelmeyer reported on the Committee's activities.

New Applications:

1. On December 31, 2009 Vermont Transco, LLC filed an application to co-locate antenna on the existing telecommunications transmission tower on Chipman Hill in the Town of Middlebury. On January 6, 2010 the District Environmental Commission issued notice that it would treat this application as a minor application unless a party protested in writing prior to February 5, 2010.

Approvals or Denials:

1. On January 5, 2010 the District 9 Environmental Commission issued a permit in favor of Moriah South, LLC and Edmund and Melissa Johnson allowing them 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.
2. On January 11, 2010 District 9 Environmental Commission issued a permit in favor of VTrans to construct a +/-4,000 foot, 8 foot high fence around the Middlebury airport in East Middlebury to improve airport security.

Act 248 Report – Bob reported that the Energy Committee has received an application from Addison Solar Farm to construct a one megawatt solar generation project along Route 7 at Monkton Road in Ferrisburgh. The project will consist of 187 solar arrays and generate electricity for about 170 homes. The Energy Committee requests the Full Commission vote to authorize staff to write a letter of support for this project. This will be moved later this evening under New Business.

Brownfields – Jeremy reported that Brownfields Committee is currently overseeing two major site assessments: the Shade Roller Mill in Vergennes and the MUHS Legion Fields building. The Shade

Roller Is on its last round of its Phase II investigation. In the previous round, they found some contamination above state action limits. This round is designed to quantify and locate the extent of the contamination to create clean up plan. ATC our consultant has submitted a revised QAPP to EPA and the State of Vermont for their approval.

The MUHS Legion Fields building is in the first and hopefully only round of Phase II investigation. Its QAPP for the investigation has been accepted by EPA and will begin shortly as weather allows. ACRPC still has both petroleum and all hazards assessment money and is looking for projects. If you know of sites that may be interested or eligible, please contact Adam or a member of the Brownfields committee.

Energy – Bob reported that the committee met on Friday, January 8. They reviewed their December presentation on Residential and Commercial Wood Boilers and continued to refine plans for future presentations. Of special interest will be our January 28 presentations where Elizabeth will provide information on programs available to the towns from the RCP under the EECBG and information on writing a successful Comprehensive Grant Application. We have received the contract for the \$153,700 grant and have word that the contract for the \$80,000 grant is on the way. We have scheduled a light bulb exchange in Monkton to be held on the fourth Saturday of March at the Monkton Fire Station. Charlie Huizenga and that Monkton Energy Committee will run the event. He reminded everyone that Saturday, March 13 is the Green Energy Expo at the MUHS. It will be an all day event, from 9 am – 4 pm, including many workshops and exhibits. The next Committee meeting will be Wednesday, February 3 at 7 pm, an evening meeting, for the convenience of our new committee members.

Natural Resources – Mary Dodge reported that the Committee met on the and approved the Air Quality Section and will meet again this month to continue their work on updating our Natural Resources Section of the Regional Plan.

Strategic Planning – Adam reported that the Committee is planning an outreach to all of the Selectboards in our region and looking for the Commissioners to help them. He distributed a proposed outline, which reads:

Goal:

This outreach effort intends to strengthen the relationship between ACRPC, its commissioners and the Selectboards of the municipalities they represent. Specific objectives of the meeting include:

- A. Re-enforcing/ re-establishing the contact between ACRPC's Commissioners and the Selectboard that appoints them;
- B. Establishing ACRPC on the Selectboard's mind prior to or just after town meeting so they make good appointments in a timely manner.
- C. Providing information about the activities of ACRPC both regionally and with each municipality
- D. Hearing and responding to Selectboard's interests

Preparation:

Staff will call the delegates/alternates for each town for which they are responsible. Staff will coordinate delegates/alternates, review the meeting agenda and ask for a lead delegate to schedule the meeting with the Selectboard, if no one volunteers the “lead delegate” will be chosen by default based upon seniority. Lead delegate will contact Selectboard and request one half hour on their agenda. Delegate(s), Alternate(s) and Staff will attend.

Outline of Discussion:

1. Lead delegate introduction/presentation.
Comments by other delegates/alternates
2. Discussion of Regional Activities/Program Areas (Emphasize expansion of Services)(VAPDA Brochure)
3. Discussion of Services to specific Town (List from all staff members)
4. What would this Selectboard like to see from ACRPC?
5. Conclusion/next steps/thank you

Supporting information on ACRPC to be handed out:

- a. List of delegates, attendance
- b. Expectations of delegates
- c. Brochure of regional activities (VAPDA)
- d. List of town specific projects

Mary said that she met with the SB and would like help improving the communication. Jeremy Grip asked if the meetings would be held prior to Town Meeting. Adam answered that they will be held before or shortly after Town Meeting Day, within the next couple of months. Fred noted that Adam was grilled in Middlebury last month to justify the extra fee and he came out okay. Elizabeth added that Adam was well prepared for the meeting.

Transportation Advisory – Bob reported that they met on December 16. They heard a report from Representative Diane Lanpher about the Champlain Bridge project and the condition of other bridges in the state. It would appear that the new bridge will be a modified network tied arch bridge. It will have two lanes at 11 feet wide each, two bike lanes at 5 feet each, and two sidewalks at five feet wide each. Rep. Lanpher reported that there are 2,700 bridges in the state, with one third of those in poor condition. The Transportation budget is close to on target mostly because of the new 2% fuel tax. There was discussion as to how to improve the timeline on A.O.T. projects. Our most popular suggestion is to funnel money directly to the towns and avoid the A.O. T. altogether. They reconsidered the Route 125 situation I Ripton. It appears the state can draw on FEMA funds to do mitigation to try to minimize future flood damage. They noted to have Rick rewrite the RFP to ask firms to study options to stabilize and improve conditions on that section of Route 125. The RFP budget is \$10-14,000.

V. Joint Partners Report – Collaboration continues on the Champlain Bridge project.

VI. Delegate/Staff Recognition/Project Highlights

Monthly Highlights for Commissioners

Tim's noted his main tasks for the next couple of months respond to recommendations made after the series of emergency planning exercises held during the fall. The recommendations include arranging additional training opportunities in Incident Command System and Emergency Planning and producing small scale exercises to highlight emergency operations centers and national radio frequencies.

Elizabeth stated she has been developing all of the educational programming for the Green Energy Expo to be held on Saturday, March 13, 2010 from 9 am – 4 pm, and encourages you all to mark your calendars to attend.

Rick encourages commissioners with thoughts about design elements of the Champlain Bridge to get them to him now. He notes the design work will be 50% completed by early February and complete by the beginning of April. He also asks that any one with comments regarding the north/south corridors into Chittenden County, especially comments concerning future growth, share their comments with him. He is currently working on the future corridor conditions report that will be included in the Chittenden County Long Range Transportation Plan and welcomes any feedback.

Kevin highlighted the work he has been doing with towns and VCGI coordinating parcel mapping requests. VCGI will be hosting town parcel maps on their web site for anonymous download. A VCGI rep is contacting each town to request copies of their digital parcel maps from the town or from ACRPC if we have them. He would also like to highlight work he has been doing with ACTR and Middlebury College intern on transit mapping in Google Transit, which will make ACTR's network the first in Vermont available on Google's system.

Adam highlighted the water quality work Tim and Kevin have been doing on the Middlebury River. Last summer they completed a corridor management plan for the Middlebury River. It highlighted a number of projects to improve water quality and reduce hazards along the river. Many of those projects have been implemented (MALT's preservation of riverine habitat in East Middlebury, a Fluvial Erosion Hazard District in Ripton, a Fluvial Erosion Hazard District in Middlebury) and we have just secured two new clean and clear grants to complete several others (Preservation of Floodplains upstream of the village in Ripton, and construction of a flume to help the river access those floodplains. He also wants you to know that \$37,000 of the Energy grants for the county we secured will be going immediately into energy improvements in the Sherriff's office and jail, helping to improve the efficiency of those buildings and reduce operating costs.

VII. Old Business:

1. **Crown Point Bridge** – Adam passed around some photos of the demolished bridge.
2. **EECBG Grant updates** – We have received the contract for the \$153,700 grant and are expecting the contract for the \$80,000 grant shortly. Elizabeth added that she is now working on prequalifying auditors to do energy audits on the municipal buildings, including schools

that were invited to submit comprehensive application for EECBG funding to Towns. She will be scheduling energy audits next week, beginning with Towns that are submitting applications, followed by the other Towns in our county.

3. **Appointment of Addison County Economic Development Corporation (ACEDC)**
Representative from ACRPC – Adam reported that we need to nominate a candidate to represent ACRPC to the ACEDC soon and that Bruce Webster has indicated that he is interested. Ralph expressed his concern that Bruce may not be available to attend the meetings, due to his recent and unfortunate illness. Bob agreed that attendance is important due to the need for economic development in our region. Thea noted that the representative can serve two three-year terms. Richard asked if Bruce was nominated. Thea answered that Bruce was not nominated, but he is interested. Thea asked for volunteers to the position. Pat Peters and Fred Dunnington were recommended and are willing to serve. Fred suggested that Adam figure out what group is not represented on the ACEDC and consider filling the void with our representative. Harvey added that h serves on the Board as an individual, not representing any group. He advised that the representative have a real interest in economic development and have a business background. We need to stimulate our economy and bring new business to the region. He added that they are fortunate to have Robin Scheu as the Executive Director, as she is a strong business person and takes direction well from the Board. Adam asked that anyone else with an interest let him know, and he will recommend someone at next month’s meeting.
4. **Meeting Cancellation Policy** – Adam reminded everyone about our meeting cancellation policy, which applies to all of the meetings held at ACRPC. Elizabeth added that the policy is posted on our website, and notices of cancelled meetings will be posted on the website and a message left on our answering machine. Harvey moved that we adopt the meeting cancellation policy; Charlie seconded. The motion passed, with Bob opposing.

VIII. New Business:

1. **Meeting Cancellation Policy** – Adam reminded everyone about our meeting cancellation policy, which applies to all of the meetings held at ACRPC. Elizabeth added that the policy is posted on our website, and notices of cancelled meetings will be posted on the website and a message left on our answering machine. Harvey moved that we adopt the meeting cancellation policy; Charlie seconded. The motion passed, with Bob opposing.
2. **Proposed new planner position** – Adam reported that he has offered Claire Tebbs a position as a land use planner, but she has yet to accept the offer, as she is living on the east side of the Green Mountains and needs to find a rental home closer to our offices in order to accept the position. He hopes she will accept the offer and begin working for ACRPC in about a month. She will be assisting towns with their land use planning and grant writing, among other responsibilities. Claire is a landscape architect and project manager, and has worked with communities on agriculture and storm water issues.

3. **Addison Solar Farm** – Bob moved that the Commission support the recommendation of the Energy Committee to regarding the pre-application from Addison Solar Farm to construct a one megawatt solar generation project along Route 7 at Monkton Road in Ferrisburgh; Charlie seconded. Adam described the background to the project. We receive pre-applications prior to the Public Service Board (PUB) receiving the applications. The project is a solar farm to be located next to Vergennes High School on Route 7 in Ferrisburgh. Elizabeth sent the pre-application letter, plan and committee recommendation to everyone's email address. She also posted the full pre-application packet on the folding board located on the table behind you. The Energy Committee made a recommendation at their meeting last Friday. Fred asked if the recommended plantings would interfere with the ability of the solar panels to collect solar radiation. Bob replied that it is not the Committee's intention for the plantings to interfere with solar collection. Fred asked if Route 7 drops off into the field. Rob replied that the drop is only 3 feet. Fred asked where the transmission line is located. Bob answered that he expects there are three phase power lines at underground from the field to the grid. Fred asked if the committee expects to have a conversation with the owners. Bob replied that they do hope to do so. Harvey asked if we are a party to this project application. Adam replied that it is similar to Act 250, where we are a party to any project with regional impact, as this is. The Committee is making a recommendation to the Full Commission for support which includes some mitigation, which is common for most projects of this space. Screening would improve the aesthetics of the viewshed from Route 7. Bob added that we need to be fair in our assessment because the VELCO project located a mere 300 yards away from this project received much scrutiny and mitigation requests. Harvey added that if we are a party, we may want to keep out options open. Adam replied that they are looking for our feedback. Ellen added that the VELCO tower was huge, so it's different from this project. The VELCO mitigation was a result of public outcry. We should wait until Ferrisburgh asks for our assistance. Adam replied that this project has a regional impact therefore we need to review it and make a recommendation. Thea reiterated that the owner asked us for input. There is no filing as yet. Jeremy suggested that we wholeheartedly support the project and that the aesthetics may be desirable. Fred supported being a participant in the discussion. Ralph asked: if we accept the recommendation, would our recommendation hinder the project? Thea replied that we do not have final approval. Bob read the recommendation from the Energy Committee – it requests that the project be held to similar aesthetic standards of previous energy project reviews. Specifically, the Committee recommends that the viewshed from Route 7 be mitigated with a dense shrubbery buffer area along the length of the project along Route 7.

Rich Warren asked for an explanation on what previous reviews were. Adam answered that it refers to the extensive reviews of the VELCO expansion project where we assisted the towns in asking for reduction in the size of the poles and landscape mitigation. Rich also asked why the committee does not address the energy issues, but only landscape mitigation. Adam answered that the Committee supports the project meaning that it is consistent with the Energy Section of our Regional Plan, and that its only concern is the viewshed along Route 7. Jeremy commented that the project could be seen by some as having a positive impact on the viewshed, for those who support solar energy projects. He suggested that the Committee not offer mitigation at this time, and wait until the Town requests support for its

recommendations for mitigation, if any. Rich asked why the committee chose the Route 7 side of the project as needing a visual barrier. Adam answered that the project is most visible along Route 7, and that the vegetation would not hide the project, but rather mitigate its impact as one drives along Route 7. Bob explained that the Town of Ferrisburgh has spend considerable time and resources to protect the Route 7 viewshed, and that, if this project were subject to local zoning regulations, the setback from Route 7 would be 80 feet, not the 15 feet mapped out for this project. Ralph suggested that without interference, some screening would be recommended. Pat asked what would happen if they cannot add landscaping. Adam answered that it is common for projects of this type to include a budget for landscaping. Rich recommended that we go on record that we want to be given consideration. Adam answered that we are already a party to this project, by way of our Act 248 review, due to the fact that this project has regional impact based on its impact on Route 7, a major thoroughfare in Addison County. Harvey recommended that we support the project. Bob added that it was not the intention of the Committee to set a hard and fast rule regarding landscaping. He expects some accommodation when the owners come to the table to discuss the application. Elizabeth noted that this is only the pre-application and that much review will follow. Jeremy suggested that Bob speak to the issue as a resident when that time comes, and that the Energy Committee simply support the project, and strike the clause about mitigation. The question was called. Andrew moved amending the motion, but later withdrew his amendment. Fred recommended that we soften the committee's recommendation. He moved that we amend the motion to read: The Energy Committee supports solar energy production in the field and wishes to remain a party to the review, including mitigation of the project's impact on the viewshed from Route 7; Andrew seconds. The amendment passes with Michael abstaining. The motion as amended passed, with Michael abstaining.

- IX. There being no further business, Bill Sayre moved that we adjourn. Thea adjourned the meeting at 10:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Elizabeth Golden
Land Use and Environmental Planner