

Meeting Minutes
Addison County Regional Planning Commission
Wednesday, November 14, 2012

ACRPC held its Monthly Meeting at ACRPC's office on 14 Seminary Street in Middlebury on November 14, 2012 with Harvey Smith of New Haven, presiding.

ROLL CALL:

<i>Addison:</i>		<i>Orwell:</i>	
<i>Bridport:</i>	Ed Payne Andrew Manning	<i>Panton:</i>	
<i>Bristol:</i>	Bill Sayre Chico Martin Peter Grant	<i>Ripton:</i>	Jeremy Grip
<i>Cornwall:</i>		<i>Salisbury:</i>	
<i>Ferrisburgh:</i>		<i>Shoreham:</i>	
<i>Goshen:</i>	Chad Chamberlin	<i>Starksboro:</i>	Richard Warren
<i>Leicester:</i>		<i>Vergennes:</i>	
<i>Lincoln:</i>	Steve Revell	<i>Waltham:</i>	
<i>Middlebury:</i>	Fred Dunnington Karl Neuse David Hamilton Susan Shashok	<i>Weybridge:</i>	
<i>Monkton:</i>	Thea Gaudette Charlie Huizenga	<i>Whiting:</i>	Ellen Kurrelmeyer
<i>New Haven:</i>	Harvey Smith		

CITIZEN INTEREST REPRESENTATIVES:

<i>Addison County Farm Bureau:</i>	Kent Wright
<i>Addison County Economic Development Corp:</i>	Harvey Smith
<i>Otter Creek Audubon Society:</i>	Margaret Lowe
<i>Otter Creek Natural Resources:</i>	
<i>Addison County Chamber of Commerce:</i>	Andrew Mayer

ACRPC EXECUTIVE BOARD

Chair: Harvey Smith
Vice-Chair: Jeremy Grip
Secretary: William Sayre
Treasurer: Fred Dunnington
At Large: Steve Revell
Andrew Manning
Ellen Kurrelmeyer

STAFF

Executive Director: Adam Lougee
Assistant Director/GIS Manager: Kevin Behm
EM/Senior Planner: Tim Bouton
Transportation/Senior Planner: Daryl Benoit
Land use Planner: Claire Tebbs
Office Manager/Bookkeeper: Pauline Cousino
Regional Planner: Kevin Lehman

7:30 Presentation: Harvey Smith, the Chair, called the Meeting to order at 7:30 to address the Commission's agenda. He introduced the Commission's guest for the evening, Steve Wark and Tim Lyons of Vermont Gas. Steve thanked Harvey and proceeded into his Power point presentation regarding Vermont Gas's proposal to build a natural gas transmission line to serve Vergennes and Middlebury. **A copy of that presentation and maps of the currently proposed route can be found on ACRPC's website at www.acrpc.org.**

Steve's presentation gave a history of how they chose the route generally following the VELCO right of way on the eastern side of the region down into New Haven and then heading to Middlebury via Route 7 from the River Road in New Haven. Steve noted that Vermont Gas also intends to build a second phase of this pipeline within Addison County to Serve International Paper in Fort Ti New York, but that proposal will be later and is still in preliminary design. Steve noted that Vermont Gas intended to file for a Certificate of Public Good for the Middlebury portion of the project in December. Steve then reviewed Vermont Gas's responses to questions or comments posed by ACRPC's committees, which Adam had supplied to him prior to the meeting. Adam noted that the Committee proposals were merely advisory until adopted by the full commission. The commission will discuss them at length at its December meeting. This was an opportunity for an informal discussion and to ask questions before the commission decided how it wanted to act regarding the Vt Gas proposal.

Harvey then opened the floor to questions:

Richard Warren asked why the proposed route did not serve Monkton Ridge on the other side of Monkton Pond.

Steve Wark replied that the Company was trying to create a direct route to Middlebury and Vergennes, but still serve a portion of Monkton and the school. It was easier and less costly to serve the school and Boro, but not the ridge.

Tim Lyons noted that the costs of Vermont Gas systems construction are born by its ratepayers. Vermont Gas does not want to incur costs that will raise rates.

Susan Shashok asked about the difference between "access points" and "Gate Stations".

Steve Wark replied that access points served smaller service areas than gate stations.

Chico Martin: Noted that since Vermont ratepayers are funding the system and that most of the impacts would be borne by Vermont towns, as a representative of Bristol, he felt Vermont Gas should commit its resources to serve Bristol before it provided service to International Paper.

Steve Wark replied that ratepayers from Chittenden and Franklin County were subsidizing this construction. However, he also noted that International Paper was paying for its entire segment. He also noted that Bristol benefited from the International Paper project because it brought transmission lines much closer to Bristol.

Peter Grant noted that the gate station serving Vergennes could also serve Bristol.

Steve Wark agreed with Peter and noted that it was a matter of when Vermont Gas got to Bristol, not if they would serve them. Vermont Gas wants to serve Bristol.

Peter Grant asked if there were a disaster on the line, how long it would take Vermont Gas to shut it down.

Steve Wark replied that Vermont Gas had never had a break on a transmission line.

Jeremy Grip asked where Vermont Gas proposed to cross Otter Creek.

Steve Wark replied that he was not exactly sure yet, **but that Vermont Gas would send distribution maps to the RPC when the nailed them down.** He also noted that Vermont Gas would directional bore under the Creek.

Thea Gaudette asked if Vermont Gas would supply emergency equipment to towns to respond in case of emergency.

Steve Wark replied that Vermont Gas would supply training, but expected the towns would use tax revenue from the line to secure equipment.

Steve Revell noted that Addison County fire fighters expected they could respond to an emergency on the line within ten minutes. How would Vermont Gas support that response?

Steve Wark noted that Vermont Gas had an emergency command center manned 24/7 and that they could communicate with fire fighters from that center and shut the pipeline down from there as well if necessary. Vermont Gas would commit to having people on site within the guidelines required by the state, 30 minutes.

Kevin Behm asked about leaks and if sniffing data is available to the public?

Tim Lyons responded that Vermont Gas had a no leak tolerance, unlike older systems. Also, all safety incidents in the past 10 years were available to the public on the PHYMSA website. Vermont Gas had one distribution incident in the past 10 years caused by ice damage at one residence.

Jeremy Grip asked about Vermont Gases Efficiency Program.

Steve Wark replied that the program had recently received an award from quality from EPA. He noted it would be available to all Vt Gas customers and would include Addison County.

Margaret Lowe noted that she was concerned about the impacts of wildlife in the VELCO corridor during construction. She asked if Vermont Gas knew of the Audubon society's study of birds in the Corridor and what Vermont Gas would do to protect nesting habitat.

Steve Wark responded that Vermont Gas had all VELCO data including the wildlife studies and that their consultants would address them.

Peter Grant asked about Fracking.

Steve Wark noted that Vermont Gas was a distribution company only and did not produce its own gas. He also noted that it used Canadian Gas, most of which was captured without fracking. He noted that Canada regulates the production industry.

Kevin Behm asked how noisy gate stations were.

Steve Wark replied that they can be noisy, but that these will be in buildings at plank and exchange street and therefore very quiet.

Susan Shashok noted that she was concerned about long-term maintenance of aging infrastructure and asked how Vermont Gas addressed it.

Steve Wark noted that Vermont Gas followed a no leak policy. They replace pipes before they fail. He stated that Vermont Gas had spent \$50 Million dollars on the system in the past 5 years.

Jeremy Grip asked what the lifespan of a pipe is.

Steve Wark replied these pipes had an expected useful life of up to 100 years.

Harvey closed the program due to the time and thanked our presenters for their time. He noted that due to the lateness of the hour, he would like to continue the business meeting until the Commission's December meeting. The commission agreed.

Members Concerns: Harvey asked for any announcements or concerns that could not wait until next meeting. Ellen noted that the Town of Whiting was hosting a meeting on EEE at its Town hall Tomorrow evening.

Adjourn: Peter Grant of Bristol moved to adjourn the meeting, Ellen Kurrelmeyer seconded the motion. The motion, passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Adam G. Lougee, Director