

# Natural Resources Committee

## DRAFT Minutes

*Jan 14, 2015*

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**Committee Members:** Diana Carter, Nick Causton, Colin Davis, Peter Grant, Stan Grzyb, David Hamilton, Wendy Sue Harper (Chair), Arabella Holzpfel, David Ludwig, Andrea Ochs, Ed Payne, Mark Pumiglia, David Raphael, Paul Wagner, Kent Wright

**Present:** Nick Causton, Stan Grzyb, David Hamilton, Wendy Sue Harper, Arabella Holzpfel, Ed Payne

**Staff:** Kevin Behm

**Guest:**

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Wendy Sue opened the meeting at 6:40. A quorum was not present for the last meeting's minutes to be approved.

- Review of the Regionally Significant Resource Map

Wendy Sue asked Kevin to provide some background on the Significant Regional Resource Map. Kevin said that the map was developed by the NRC to help identify regional resources that the Commission considers significant enough to trigger involvement under Act 250 or Act 248 if those resources are impacted. This policy is highlighted in Chapter 2 of the Regional Plan – Substantial Regional Impact. The map is further described in Chapter 8 – Future Land Use; Map 8-2. The Plan Re-Write Committee is currently reviewing the Future Land Use chapter and the NRC should review the map for any changes.

Ed noted that the Natural Resources chapter does not contain 'shalls' by design, thus eliminating mandatory regulation. Kevin added that the chapter emphasized municipal regulation, but identified the significant regional resources to allow for participation in state permitting if the Commission chose to. Ed expressed that the Agency of Natural Resources in particular has been extending their regulatory reach into local, and regional issues with septic, shoreland, energy, and now sprawl regulations using Act 250 Criterion 9L. He is concerned about the loss of local control over land use policies. Wendy Sue noted that Monkton recently updated their Town Plan with a lot of effort and with the expectation that the vision and policies would be respected by state agencies. She added that the town policies endeavored to protect resources and retain their economic value for the community.

Stan asked whether the Natural Resource chapter addressed siting of solar facilities. Ed responded that the NRC did establish some scenic policies concerning siting. He also noted that Adam had recently passed out draft solar array siting guidelines to the Energy Committee for review. The guidelines were a template that identified siting elements towns could modify. David felt that specific criteria should be developed so towns could be consistent. Stan asked about the scenic policies. Arabella identified Goal C in the

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Scenic Resource section which reads “*Support the development of alternative energy sources and an efficient telecommunication network when such facilities do not have adverse environmental or aesthetic impacts*” (p 4-74). Wendy Sue noted that Monkton’s plan emphasizes the scenic and habitat value of hilltops and limits any development. She also noted that the town will be working with the RPC to study other scenic resources.

Returning to the Regionally Significant Resource Map the committee decided to ask the Re-Write Committee to hold off on approving any decision on the Future Land Use chapter until the NRC has completed review of the map. The Committee also asked Kevin to send the map out to the other RPC delegates for their comments on the map.

The Committee will begin review of the Scenic Resource element of the plan and discuss Criterion 9L at the next meeting. The Committee also discussed having RPC staff demonstrate recent resource mapping technology that is publically accessible. This could be done before the next Commission meeting or as a public program for the Commission. [update – Kevin will present during the public program for the Commission]

Wendy Sue thanked the members for their ideas and participation

The Committee adjourned at 7:10.