



## **MINUTES**

**September 25, 2014**

**5:30 PM**

### **Hildene - Manchester Village, Vermont**

Present: Dan Monks (Bennington), Bill Pennebaker (Shaftsbury), Nancy Faesy (Dorset), Janet Hurley (Manchester Village), Peter Luca (Sunderland), William Deveneau (Bennington), Bruce Lierman (Transportation), Ed Shea (Woodford), Allison Stori (Manchester), Charlie Rockwell (Rupert), Meg Cottam (Glastenbury), Peter Luca (Sunderland), Suzy dePeyster (Sandgate), Paul Myers (Peru), John LaVecchia (Dorset), Phil Chapman (Rupert)

Staff: Jim Sullivan, Jim Henderson, Michael Batchner, Kiah Morris, Katie Emerson, Liz Thompson, Salem Carriker, Bill Colvin

Others: Nelson Brownell (Pownal), Joan Menson (Dorset), Bob Menson (Dorset), Sara Gilbert (NWWVT), Charles Bentley (Sandgate), Valerie dePeyster (Sandgate), Joanne Race (Shaftsbury), Mitchell Race (Shaftsbury), Seth Bongartz (Hildene), Ethan Swift (ANR)

I. Minutes of July BCRC meeting

Motion by Hurley: Approve as submitted. Second by Myers. Passed unanimously.

II. Bank of Bennington Resolution

Resolution to approve a new bank account and authorize the officers to sign the resolution giving power to officers and staff to conduct bank business. Motion to approve the resolution by Shea. Second by Deveneau. Passed unanimously.

III. Public Hearing on Approval of Dorset, Rupert, Shaftsbury Town Plans

Monks opened the hearing and explained the process pursuant to 24 VSA Section 4350.

Hearing closed after brief comment and note that BCRC staff had reviewed the plans (reports had been sent to all commissioners previously) and found them to be consistent with statutory requirements. Also that the executive committee discussed the plans and recommended approval.

Motion by Myers: Approve the three town plans and approve the planning processes for Dorset, Rupert, and

Shaftsbury. Second LaVecchia. Passed unanimously with nine additional affirmative votes submitted via email (commissioners Hassett, Stiles, Plock, Squires, Broderick, Printz, Klinger, Boehlert, and Printz).

#### IV. Hildene - Recent Initiatives and Sustainability

Seth Bongartz presented a history of Hildene and a discussion of how it has been changing. It was critical for Hildene as an organization to change its mission and incorporate the entire property - the house and its history as well as the surrounding 412 acres. The mission has become "Values into Action" with an understanding that civic responsibility is essential to the organization.

Hildene has become recognized as a "Lincoln" site, and reflects Lincoln's values in its vision and activities. Hildene has worked diligently to clearly identify its brand: authentic, dynamic, educational, friendly, and a sense of community. It has been critical to be disciplined in carrying out the mission and being consistent with its brand. Hildene is committed to excellence - in everything it does.

Topics covered:

Social impact: Hildene works with local school children (history and natural sciences programming); membership is very inexpensive so that local residents can enjoy the property; less emphasis now on entertainment - now focus is on education.

Environmental impact: creating a model of environmental sustainability. Hildene has a forest management plan - sustainable harvesting with use of timber and cordwood on site; creation of a composting system, Hildene Meadows being returned to agricultural use - everything produced there to be used at Hildene; creation of a pollinator sanctuary and reserving 20 acres of hayfields to protect bobolinks; conservation of land.

Economic impacts: 35 FTEs, many full-time jobs filled by people in their 20s and 30s. 36,000 visitors in 2013. Attendance has increased steadily since 2005. \$5 million of direct economic impact to the local economy annually.

Discussion of creation of Shires of Vermont brand - started at Hildene, and Hildene continues to be part of this regional brand.

Questions:

Is the model being pursued by Hildene going to be able to sustain economic downturns? Memberships, donations, special events, and building an endowment help to weather economic dips, but it is a continuing challenge.

Volunteers? Yes, many who come to help at events, work at gardens, do fundraising, etc.

Fullness of experience to be a regional draw? Different activities and attractions around a single theme has been critical. Hildene will become a full-day experience with complete integration of the Meadows into Hildene.

Ongoing importance of weddings and other special events: absolutely will continue in a way that is consistent with the mission, with a focus on local flavor and sustainability. Big events at the Meadows will not be continued because they are not consistent with the mission.

More adult education? Yes - and will be doing more.

Online programs? Looking at it right now - getting some of the children's programs online now, gets Hildene national exposure.

V. Tactical Basin Planning - Vermont's Approach to Watershed Management, Ethan Swift, VT Agency of Natural Resources

Overview of Tactical Basin Planning. ANR defines 15 major river basins in Vermont. Primarily the Hoosic, Walloomsac, Batten Kill (together Basin 1) and Mettawee Rivers in our region. Emphasis is now less on point source pollution and more on watershed-wide diffuse/non-point impacts. Focus on implementation - high priority actions within each watershed to target specific water quality concerns.

Discussed specific pollutants and "TMDL" (total maximum daily load) standards - much attention recently in Lake Champlain basin with phosphorous impacts.

Monitoring and assessment of biological data, chemistry, and physical processes (stream geomorphology and how people have changed the river system) discussed. Evaluation of municipal projects (e.g., Better Backroads, etc.). Data is compiled into various reports.

Natural Resources Atlas - diversity of online information that can be easily combined; very accessible to towns and the general public. Water quality monitoring stations also included on the Atlas. Many other groups are collecting data in cooperation with ANR and their lab. Looking at all of this data can help understand the origin of problems and possible solutions.

Overview of : floodplains and related river management issues, transportation infrastructure projects that address stormwater and flood management issues, land use analyses - how developed areas affect rivers and water quality, stormwater assessments and projects to reduce adverse impacts from runoff (potential for increasing infiltration) and overflows from sanitary sewer systems.

Watershed Management Division develops strategies based on analyses to protect and restore water resources. Some of the impacts to the Batten Kill are acid deposition in Green Mountain tributaries, stormwater runoff, and some invasives. Other rivers in the region have reports specific to those watersheds. Discussion of designations as Outstanding Resource Waters and Class 1 Wetlands as strategies.

Discussed achievements to date, use of ecosystem restoration program (\$2.5 million per year in funding), and other programs and initiatives in cooperation with VTrans, Agency of Agriculture, and other agencies and organizations.

Flood resiliency efforts: discussed in the context of Irene experience. Municipal comprehensive plans, hazard mitigation plans, flood hazard and FEH regs, and river corridor studies reviewed.

Question: How to revive the Basin 1 planning process? Ethan is starting to update the data/information and reach out to BCRC, towns, USFS, and others to get the process moving again. Ethan presented his contact information: 802-786-2503 and [ethan.swift@state.vt.us](mailto:ethan.swift@state.vt.us).

The BCRC will put both of this evening's presentations up on [www.bcrcvt.org](http://www.bcrcvt.org) as soon as they are available.

Adjourned at 8:00 PM.