



MINUTES

November 20, 2014

Bennington Project Independence – Route 7A – Bennington

Commissioners Present: Dan Monks (Bennington), Nancy Faesy (Dorset), John LaVecchia (Dorset), Bill Pennebaker (Shaftsbury), Walt Klinger (Pownal), Sheilah Printz (Community Public Health), Scott Printz (Energy), Judy Boehlert (Sandgate), Bruce Lierman (Transportation), Meg Cottam (Glastenbury), Bill Deveneau (Bennington), Janet Hurley (Manchester Village), Paul Myers (Peru), John Broderick (Housing)

Others Present: Bill Christian (Shaftsbury), Jim Henderson (Staff), Jim Sullivan (Staff), Michael Batchner (Staff), Bill Colvin (Staff)

I. Minutes of September Meeting

Motion (Pennebaker): Approve the Minutes of the September 25, 2014 meeting of the BCRC. Second by Lierman. Passed unanimously.

II. Regional Plan Update

Jim Sullivan gave a presentation on the work that has been done to update the Bennington County Regional Plan. He talked about the statutory requirements and also noted that DHCD and ANR have reviewed the draft and, while providing some comments and suggestions, indicated that it has addressed all previously identified deficiencies and meets all statutory requirements. The presentation was organized around the required elements and goals of the Planning and Development Act. Deficiencies identified in the 2013 independent review were noted and changes intended to correct those issues were described (see attached presentation).

The following comments were offered during the course of the presentation:

Bruce Lierman inquired about the ability to defend the plan and its land use policies in regulatory proceedings. Sullivan explained the way that the plan is used in Act 250 and Section 248 and noted where it had been successful in the past. Sullivan also noted that there were some difficulties in getting full consideration of the

plan in certain 248 proceedings, but that the plan has been made as specific as possible so that it can be effective.

Bill Pennebaker suggested that net metering and community solar be added to the energy section.

Walt Klinger stated that smart meters are a problem; the “smart grid” is the way to go to promote efficiency in the use of electricity. He noted cyber security threats and the need to be prepared to deal with them.

Bill Pennebaker said that broadband needs to be addressed in multiple chapters because it is important in so many ways (public utilities, economic development, etc.).

Walt Klinger discussed Pownal’s struggles with how to address the need to have a place for children to go after school, and for older children, a safe and positive place to go in general. He noted that this is a region-wide concern, not limited to Pownal.

John Broderick said that the Regional Plan as drafted is a strong document that will provide support for appropriate housing development in the region.

Janet Hurley felt that the Plan needs to be more accessible and user-friendly on the BCRC’s website. It should be easy to navigate to the section you want to review.

Paul Myers suggested describing how this plan will evolve over time and how it is related to municipal plans.

The final revisions to the draft should be completed by the end of December and a hearing draft released prior to BCRC’s January meeting. It is hoped that the Commission will vote in January to hold the two required hearings in March, after which the Plan can be formally adopted by a 60% vote of commissioners and then submitted to all 17 municipalities and DHCD.