Commissioners Present: Jodi French, Chair; Rod Francis, Jack Cunningham, Piet van Loon, Greg Brown, Gabby Ciuffreda, Tom Consolino, Lew Sorenson, Tim Arsenault, John Whitman (non-Exec Board Commissioner) Note: All but John Whitman participated by phone due to inclement weather and travel conditions.

Absent: Carolyn Partridge

Staff Present: Chris Campany

Presenter: Prudence MacKinney, Citizens Interest Commissioner for Healthy Communities and District Director of the Vermont Department of Health

Public:

Convoked: 6:00PM

Administrative Reports:

Secretary’s Report: Minutes were approved on a motion by Piet, seconded by Jack, by a unanimous roll call vote.

Treasurer’s Report: Treasurer Lew Sorenson summarized the financial report for the month of February, noting that the WRC is in a better financial position than it’s ever been. He also noted that the FY 2017 audit has been received and will be reviewed by the Finance Committee at a meeting in April. On a motion by Piet, seconded by Jack, the Treasurer's Report was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Program:

Prudence MacKinney, Citizen’s Interest Commissioner for Healthy Communities – Opportunities for WRC Support of Healthy Community Initiatives in the Region: Commissioner MacKinney provided information about the recent snow shoe donations to libraries in the region and expressed appreciation for the support of the WRC, especially that of Senior GIS Planner, Jeff Nugent. The goal is to help people to be more active, especially in winter. The snow shoes were delivered to the libraries the prior week with the Department of Health as the primary sponsor. 4-5 adult pairs were provided and 6 child pairs. She would like for this collaboration to continue, including the creation of an on-line trail resource that would be hosted on the WRC website. This would build upon information already compiled by Jeff and would make use of information provided by other agencies and organizations. Jack recommended the WRC review similar compilations of the US Forest Service, the Green Mountain Club, and other groups. Lew suggested the list be accompanied by points of contact. She then reviewed the 3/4/50 framework which looks at 3 behaviors that contribute most to the chronic health problems that are leading causes of death among Vermonters. She would like to make a ½ hour presentation to the Full Commission to get feedback on how to best approach towns. There was unanimous support for this suggestion, and it was suggested that Commissioners be urged to take the information to their respective selectboards.
**Request from Vermont Land Trust for Collaboration on June 10 Harvard Forest Report on Wildlands and Woodlands:** Executive Director Chris Campany explained that the Joan Weir with the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) had met with him and staff to discuss a June 10th educational event being organized in conjunction with the Putney Mountain Association and Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association where the Harvest Forest Report would be presented and discussed. VLT requested $150 from the WRC as a co-sponsor of the event. Chris was asked about the extent to which staff resources would be consumed. He explained that staff time would be limited to getting word out to towns, printing maps for a display, and attending the event. A motion was offered by Greg to act favorably upon the request. Lew seconded the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote with Piet van Loon abstaining, explaining he has a family member who works for the VLT.

**Expectations for Regional Plan, Transportation Plan, and Plan Map Updates:** Executive Director Chris Campany explained he requested this agenda item to determine the extent to which there was common agreement upon the scope and depth of the update of the Regional Plan and related maps that was about to commence. He offered the following:

- This update is on our own timeframe. There is no external push or contractual obligation driving our update schedule.
- The last Regional Plan (2014) and Regional Transportation Plan (2013) updates were substantial. At a minimum, this update should take into account:
  - issues that have arisen, particularly through the Project Review process, where our policies were unclear, weak, or otherwise insufficient or absent
  - follow-up on items identified in the current plans, such as identification of critical resource areas per plan policy
  - new data across all programmatic areas and sectors
  - new statutory and related policy requirements (Energy and Act 174; Act 171 - management of forestlands improve forest blocks and habitat connectors and encourage the use of locally-grown forest products; river corridors protection – we have language but we adopted it before state policy was finalized; Act 64 – Water Quality Initiative and related policy such as Municipal Road General Permit)
  - new rules and case law (Public Utility Commission – solar preferred sites; Exit 1 Court Ruling on standing of regional plans and plan language)
  - the potentially adopted regional energy plan amendment
- The update of maps contained within the regional plan will be substantial, and will require in-depth discussion about what source maps and data we will use and how we will use them. Some of these decisions will be driven by state law or policy. Where we have discretion, we will want to establish our own internal guidelines and policies to ensure consistency and clarity of application.
- The Proposed Land Use Map is a graphical representation of our land use policies and where those policies are in effect. That map was last updated some time ago. Use of source maps and data, guided by aforementioned external and internal guidelines and policy, will allow us to refine the present boundaries of the Proposed Land Use Map. This includes identification of yet to be identified critical resource areas. Our regional maps are also informed by town land use maps and land use policies.

He was asked about the budget and staffing implications, and explained that this was accounted for in the FY 2018 budget. Lew offered that the fact that the WRC was working on its own timeline meant that staffing effort could be adjusted according to capacity. Greg noted that the lessons learned from
the Regional Energy Plan development would inform the update, that updating the maps was essential as they are tools that we rely upon for our work, and that we should review the format of the plan, especially its policies, as some read more like action steps than policies. John Whitman offered that there should be cross-fertilization between the updating of the maps and the updating of the plan, that definitions of land uses should be reviewed to determine whether or not they are current, and that we have not yet mapped the critical resource areas discussed in the current plan. He noted he had particular interest in Resource Lands given their extent within the Town of Readsboro. There was agreement that the overall scope proposed by Chris was appropriate and that he would bring a more detailed work plan to the April meeting of the Executive Board.

**WRC Procedures for Compliance with VT Open Meeting Law:** Chris explained that at the February Full Commission meeting, concerns were raised about the timeliness of the posting of draft minutes and, on occasion, agendas, per Vermont Open Meeting Law requirements, and that subsequently the Full Commission voted that the WRC should follow Open Meeting Law. Chris explained that the Executive Board had previously directed staff not to post draft minutes as there were concerns about minutes being posted that had not been reviewed by the committee as a whole. Chris suggested that staff could offer committee chairs the opportunities to review draft minutes, but in all cases the minutes should be posted to the website in accordance with the law. It was asked that a statement to the effect that these are draft minutes and are subject to change be added to the website and to the minutes themselves, that the logo not be added to minutes until the final approved draft is posted, and that a DRAFT watermark be included on the draft minutes. Piet moved that the aforementioned process be followed by staff and the Commission. The motion was seconded by Tim. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

**Vermont Change in Local Emergency Planning Committee Focus and Implications for WRC Ad Hoc Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC):** Rod Francis explained that the state had decided that the LEPCs should focus on their primary mission, which was the reporting on the presence of and safety of the storage of hazardous materials at sites within the region. These sites include businesses, non-profits and public agencies. Previously, the LEPC had been used to also provide training for and conversations among local emergency management directors and other planners. The LEPC is not a committee of the WRC; it has its own leadership and bylaws and is staffed by the WRC. The current leadership of the LEPC has concerns about their expertise in the new direction, as do WRC staff. For this reason, over the remainder of the term of the current LEPC contract (end of June, 2018) they will discuss how EMDs can best be supported by the WRC. Rod and staff had suggested quarterly convening’s of the EMDs under the auspices of the WRC Ad Hoc Emergency Planning Committee. Chris explained that staff support for this effort would be funded by the Emergency Management Planning Grant the WRC receives from the state.

**Full Commission Quorum Issues:** Piet explained he’d like to discuss the issue about Full Commission attendance following the challenge of determining whether or not a quorum would be present at the February Full Commission meeting. Chris explained that it consumed 8-10 staff hours to determine who would actually be attending the meeting. Piet felt that towns should be informed of time commitments and expectations. He also felt that Commissioners need to be made to feel they are needed and in charge. Chris asked that committees bring more items to the Full Commission for consideration and approval. Tim suggested that towns be given the record of attendance of their Commissioners. Piet explained that the WRC used to do this but concerns had arisen and the practice was stopped some time ago. There was general agreement that participation by phone in
meetings should be a last resort, though it was also noted that due to inclement weather the current
meeting was made possible only by phone. Piet said he would lead a group of Commissioners to
deliberate upon this issue and asked that Chris be given ideas.

**Jamaica Town Plan Approval and Confirmation:** Piet explained that the Planning Coordination
Committee had reviewed the Jamaica Town Plan and recommended that it be approved and that its
planning process be confirmed. On a motion by Piet, seconded by Tom, the Jamaica Town Plan was
approved by a unanimous roll call vote with Greg abstaining. On a motion by Piet, seconded by Tom,
the planning process of the Town of Jamaica was confirmed by a unanimous roll call vote with Greg
abstaining.

**Comments on Vermont System Planning Committee (VSPC) Proposed Changes:** Chris asked if the
Executive Board was supportive of him submitting a letter to the Public Utility Commission
endorsing the change to the VSPC to include a representative that was familiar with regional
commission and town interests. There was consensus that he submits the letter.

**New Appointments:** None.

**Executive Director Report:** Chris asked if there were any questions about the Vermont Yankee
Settlement Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding to which he’d signed on the WRC.
There were none. He also asked Tim if a response was needed to a letter from the Town of Vernon
asking for WRC support of the sale of Vermont Yankee from Entergy and NorthStar since the WRC
had signed on to the aforementioned agreement. He said he did not feel a response from the
Executive Board was necessary.

**Committee Reports:**
- Community Development – Tim noted that attendance was low due to a snow storm but there was
good discussion about housing and a presentation will be held in Newfane in late April/early May.
Sarah Lang with BDCC discussed the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economy Collaborative.
- Finance – Lew explained that the committee will meet in April to review the FY 2017 audit.
- Natural Resources – Gabby said that there was low attendance due to snow but they discussed
revisions of the Purpose and Objectives statement to take into account the new water quality
initiative and basin planning emphasis. A revised draft will be brought to the April Executive Board.
- Planning Coordination – Piet explained that several town plans will be submitted to the WRC for
review. In June a basic introductory session on planning basics will be held for planning
commissions, selectboards, and other interested people.
- Transportation – Lew said there was good attendance at the meeting which focused on annual
prioritization for state funding of town and state roads and bridges. He can get rankings to anyone
interested. He was concerned that the ranking information would be difficult for Commissioners to
understand without the underlying context and for that reason he suggested the information not be
sent to all Commissioners.

On a motion by Tom, seconded by Piet, the Committee Reports were approved by a unanimous vote.
Meeting Adjourned: On a motion by Piet, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:53.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ashley Collins