Executive Board  
May 9, 2017  
WRC Conference Room

Commissioners Present: Jodi French (Chair), Piet van Loon, Jack Cunningham, Greg Brown, Lew Sorenson, Denis Pinkernell, Tom Consolino, Alan LaCombe
Excused: Carolyn Partridge, Norm Wright
Staff Present: Chris Campany
Convened: 6:00PM

Administrative Reports:
Secretary’s Report: On a motion by J. Cunningham, seconded by T. Consolino, the minutes from the April meeting were approved with one abstention.
Treasurer’s Report: On a motion by T. Consolino, seconded by J. Cunningham, the April Treasurer’s Report was approved.

Regional Energy Plan Policy Considerations & Recommendations:

1. Executive Director, Chris Campany reviewed the overarching policy positions he’s recommending be taken up by a joint meeting of the Energy, Natural Resources, Project Review and, at the request of Committee Chair Piet van Loon, Planning Coordination committees. Chris explained that the current Regional Plan (including the Regional Transportation Plan) already contains policies that emphasize energy conservation and which support switching from carbon-based fuels to renewable energy. He also explained that a working draft needs to be submitted to the Public Service Department by June 30th per a performance based contract. To that end he sought guidance on policy positions that have not been discussed in depth within the Commission, which are the WRC’s positions on utility-scale wind development and the siting of utility-scale solar. He reviewed the resource maps that have been developed by the WRC which indicate where solar and wind resources are located, and what constraints exist. He also reviewed the current regional plan Proposed Land Use map. Most of the primary and secondary wind and solar energy development potential falls within areas designated as Resource Lands and Productive Rural Lands. He then reviewed the plan policies associated with each of those designated areas. Resource Lands are to be reserved exclusively for forestry and agriculture. Productive Rural Lands are to support a variety of uses, including residential and commercial development, but preservation of the land itself is emphasized. To this end he recommended the following:
   a. With the exception of the development of the permitted utility wind project in Searsburg and Readsboro, utility scale wind is not appropriate for the region.
   b. Community scale wind – that which is supported by towns to specifically power the town or a community therein – would be allowed in Productive Rural areas, as would wind for individual residences or businesses.
c. The region can meet its renewable energy development targets through solar. Solar projects in Resource Lands should not exceed 5 acres in size, and then only with the support of the Agency of Natural Resources because such development will create needed habitat diversity. Solar projects on Productive Rural lands must meet all other land use policy requirements and should be replanted with native perennials, in developments that won’t be grazed or otherwise used for agricultural purposes, in order to provide habitat and continue to build soils.

2. Chris also explained that most town plans do not support utility scale wind, and the votes held in the towns of Windham and Grafton were reviewed. The Windham Town Plan specifically excludes utility scale wind and the Grafton Town Plan is somewhat ambiguous, allowing wind but requiring conservation measures to be met. Townshend has adopted policy language that is similar to that in Windham. In the discussion that followed the Executive Board agreed with the overall approach but with the following modifications:
   a. The plan should note that at the time of the next update, wind technology advances will be reviewed to determine if incompatible aspects of utility scale wind development can be mitigated.
   b. Solar on Resource Lands should not exceed 2 acres, and must be developed with the support of ANR for habitat diversity purposes.
   c. Solar on Productive Rural Lands must have established a decommissioning escrow account so the installation can be fully removed upon the cessation of operations.

**Vermont Equal Pay Compact**: Chris recommended that the WRC sign on to the Equal Pay Compact organized by the Vermont Commission on Women. He explained that current WRC policy is consistent with that supported by the Compact, and that there was an opportunity to collaborate to learn more about how to further support gender equality in the workplace. On a motion by Denis, with a second by Tom, the motion was **approved**.

**Proposed policy language relative to review and approval of draft Town Plans**: Planning Coordination Committee Chair Piet van Loon asked that a policy concerning the review of draft town plans or amendments that was adopted by the Planning Coordination Committee at its March 20, 2017 meeting be adopted by the Commission. Lew asked if a change was made to the plan that was suggested by the WRC, would that plan have to come back to the Commission. Piet said yes. He did not feel it would affect the timeliness of WRC review and approval. On a motion by Piet, seconded by Lew, the motion **approved**.

**Full Commission Meeting Attendance Review**: The Executive Board reviewed a record of attendance at Full Commission meetings for the last two years. Jack had taken it upon himself to identify the town-appointed Commissioners who had less than 50 percent attendance at Full Commission meetings (there were 21). He asked that staff review how the Full Commission attendance of those Commissioners compares to their participation in committees. Chris was able to do that on the spot. Of the 21 there were approximately 8 who were not particularly active on committees. To encourage engagement by current and future Commissioners it was suggested that the Commissioner Job Description be sent to Selectboards after Town Meeting and anytime a vacancy is created, and that time commitment expectations be clearly described and explained.

**New Appointments**: Guilford Commissioner Gabby Cuiffreda was appointed to Transportation and Project Review committees.
**Executive Director’s Report:** Chris provided an update about the status of the Vermont Yankee sale petition before the Public Service Board and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**Committee Reports:**

**Project Review:** Jack provided an overview of the Environmental Commission decision on the Hermitage ponds, the proposed subdividing of the residential lots on the “East Tract” by Comtuck, and the appeal of the Environmental Commission decision on the proposed helipad in Dover.

**Transportation:** Lew provided an update on the completion of the transportation project prioritization process. He asked that the Committee Reports be amended to reflect that the committee met twice in April.

**Public Policy and Legislative Committee:** Tom noted that the meetings with legislators had concluded for the session and that he’d be meeting with Chris to discuss how to make the meetings and participation therein more robust.

On a motion by Piet, seconded by Jack, the Committee Reports were accepted.

The Board voted to go into Executive Session at 8:01 p.m. to discuss the arrangement of a performance evaluation for the Executive Director. The Executive Session adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

**On a motion by Piet, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Collins