

**Mount Ascutney
Regional Commission**

Minutes of Monday, December 6, 2021
MARC Offices, Ascutney, VT
and via Zoom

Commissioners Present: Tom Marsh, Windsor; Kathy Rondeau, Reading; Wayne Wheelock, Baltimore; Walter Martone, Springfield; Terry Carter, Ludlow; Bob Flint, At-Large; Joe Fromberger, Andover; Etienne Ting, Cavendish; Tom Kenyon, West Windsor; Peter Daniels, Weathersfield.

Staff Present: Tom Kennedy, Jason Rasmussen, Cynthia Porter, Allison Hopkins, Rachel Scutter.

Tom Marsh opened the meeting at 12:01 PM.

Tom Kennedy commented that this would be his last meeting as Executive Director, and thanked the Board for their support over the years.

1. Changes to the Agenda
 - a. Items 5 and 11 were moved up on the agenda because Tom Kennedy needs to leave early.
2. Secretary's Report
 - a. *Walter Martone made a motion to approve the October 25, 2021 meeting minutes with one minor correction under Section 5a. Second by Terry Carter. Motion passed unanimously. Peter Daniels abstained.*
3. Treasurer's Report
 - a. *Wayne Wheelock made a motion to receive the October 2021 financial report. Second by Terry Carter. Motion passed unanimously.*
 - b. *Walter Martone made a motion to accept the FY2021 Audit Report. Second by Peter Daniels. Motion passed unanimously.*
 - c. Jason Rasmussen reported that Sullivan and Powers have been preparing our audit for the last few years and it is time to go out to bid again. Staff released an RFP. Proposals are due by Dec. 15th. We have received one proposal so far.
4. Brownfields
 - a. Tom Kennedy and Bob Flint gave a report on the great progress made to date with the J&L demolition project. The project is being put on hold for the winter. Photos and videos of the project work can be found at <https://www.springfielddevelopment.org/jandldemo/>.
 - b. *Walter Martone made a motion to authorize the Brownfields Steering Committee to review and approve an RLF subgrant agreement for up to \$50,000 to test the slab at the J&L #1 site in Springfield and determine if it can be removed. Second by Peter Daniels. Joe Fromberger voted no. All other Commissioners voted yes. Motion passed.*
5. Update on ARPA and Infrastructure Bill

- a. Tom Kennedy gave an update on ARPA funding. He reported that eligible projects include computer security upgrades, failing culvert upgrades, digitizing town records and website development.
 - b. Tom also reported that funding from the federal infrastructure bill is largely going to the states, and will be largely distributed through existing programs.
6. Set Annual Dues Rate and Discussion About Annual Increases
 - a. Jason Rasmussen indicated that we have set our annual dues based on the decennial census population figures, and the rate has not increased in many years. We recently got the 2020 census numbers and are proposing a five-cent increase in the dues rate. As indicated on the spreadsheet in the agenda packet, the increase is fairly minor. We will reconsider the rate annually, but do not want to lock in a set annual increase at this time.
 - b. *Joe Fromberger made a motion to set the annual dues rate for towns based on the 2020 U.S. Census population and at a rate of \$1.30/person. Second by Kathy Rondeau. Motion passed unanimously.*
7. Regional Project Priorities for ACCD
 - a. MARC and SRDC will submit to ACCD. Bob indicated that we will revisit the list annually, and there is also an opportunity to modify the list if needed. The SRDC Board will be asked to adopt the list as a next step.
 - b. *Terry Carter made a motion to adopt the regional project priority list as presented. Second by Peter Daniels. Motion passed unanimously.*
8. Discussion of Regional Plan Updates
 - a. Jason Rasmussen indicated that a few chapters are nearly ready for review by the Regional Plan Committee. Staff are still incorporating comments from stakeholder groups, but a couple chapters should be ready for review soon.
 - b. Rachel Scudder and Allison Hopkins gave an introductory presentation on diversity, equity and inclusion. We will discuss these concepts in more detail at a future meeting. At Walter Martone's suggestion, the slides will be made available to Commissioners.
9. Discuss Supreme Court Decision on Cavendish Quarry and One-Acre Towns
 - a. Jason Rasmussen and Etienne Ting reported on a Supreme Court case that would have impacts on Act 250 jurisdiction in one-acre towns. Only Cavendish and Reading are one-acre towns in this region. The project involved a stone quarry on a 175-acre lot, but that would disturb about 0.93-acre site. In the past, Act 250 permits would be required for projects on one-acre plus lots. In this decision, the court decided that jurisdiction should be determined by the area of site disturbance instead. Some people are concerned with the implications of this, which might allow commercial development on smaller lots without local or state land use permits. The court has reopened consideration of this decision.

10. Preferred Site Letter Policy

- a. Jason Rasmussen indicated that, during the net-metering rulemaking process, there was criticism of the lack of clarity statewide on how towns and regions handle requests for a preferred site letter. Establishing a written policy on how MARC handles such requests would help clarify our process. The Permit Review Committee reviewed a draft. Peter Daniels indicated it matches our current process.
- b. *Water Martone made a motion to adopt the Preferred Site Letter Policy as presented. Second by Peter Daniels. Motion passed unanimously.*

11. Adjourn

Joe Fromberger made a motion to adjourn at 1:30 p.m. Second by Kathy Rondeau. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Rasmussen