

**Mount Ascutney
Regional Commission**

Minutes of Monday August 15, 2022
via Zoom

Commissioners Present: Kathy Rondeau, Reading; Wayne Wheelock, Baltimore; Rose Goings, Alt. Ludlow; Joe Fromberger, Andover; Walter Martone, Springfield; Julie Hance, Chester; Peter Daniels, Weathersfield; Etienne Ting, Cavendish; and Tom Bock, At-Large Commissioner.

Staff Present: Jason Rasmussen, Cynthia Porter, Lisa Comstock, Tom Kennedy and Malia Cordero.

Kathy Rondeau called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm.

1. Changes to the Agenda
 - a. Kathy Rondeau asked if there were any changes to the agenda. No changes were made.
2. Secretary's Report
 - a. *Motion to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2022, meeting as presented was made by Joe Fromberger and was seconded by Julie Hance. Motion passed unanimously.*
3. Treasurer's Report
 - a. Treasurer's Report for July 2022 was presented. Jason Rasmussen advised an Audit of MARC accounts was currently being conducted so there may be a few changes to the report when that was completed. There is a surplus again this year, and the "deferred inflows of revenue" from the previous year remains unspent.
 - b. Tom Bock asked why the indirect rates were lower for FY2023, than in FY 2022. Cynthia Porter explained it is based on audit findings and VTrans approval. Our expenses were down that year largely due to COVID. Tom asked if it is possible to raise them. Cynthia Porter said she would inquire to see if they can be raised.
 - c. Joe Fromberger asked why there are two loans currently open for 100 River Street. Tom Kennedy explained one was used for PCB remediation and the other was used for other renovation projects
 - d. *A motion to receive the Treasurer's Report was made by Joe Fromberger and was seconded by Julie Hance. Motion passed unanimously.*
4. Staffing Update
 - a. *Jason Rasmussen advised two new staff members have been added. He introduced Malia Cordero, who was in attendance, who was hired as an assistant planner and started August 8, 2022. Martha Harrison, formerly the town Administrator for West Windsor, will be joining MARC as a planner on September 12, 2022.*

5. Regional Plan Draft

- a. Walter Martone advised that he and Terry Carter, who was not present at the meeting, reviewed the plan in its entirety and feel all necessary changes have been made. It is their recommendation that it be approved as presented.
- b. Tom Bock asked if selectboard members have seen the Regional Plan. Jason Rasmussen advised staff has tried to encourage broad input for the few years we have been working on these updates. We have included status updates and requests for comments in multiple newsletters. We have done a lot of outreach on certain chapters. For example, police and fire chiefs were asked for input on the Emergency Management Chapter, and housing groups were contacted for the Housing Chapter. We had an ad hoc committee that met numerous times for the Land Use Chapter. The Transportation Advisory Committee has reviewed Volume 2: Regional Transportation Plan. Many who serve on the TAC are Selectboard members.
- c. Tom Bock asked that staff send the proposed Regional Plan out specifically to the selectboard, members and other town officials asking for their review and comments.
- d. *A motion to accept the draft plan as presented and proceed with the formal adoption process was made by Joe Fromberger, and Walter Martone seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.*
- e. Public hearing schedule: Jason Rasmussen advised the two public hearings are planned for September 19, 2022, at 12:00 pm, and October 14, 2022, at 12:00 pm. The vote to adopt the plan is set for a regular MARC meeting on October 14, 2022, following immediately after the second hearing. If adopted, the effective date would be November 11, 2022.
- f. *Motion to accept proposed public hearing schedule was made by Joe Fromberger, and Walter Martone seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.*

6. Ascutney Professional Building

- a. Jason Rasmussen requested the Board of Commissioners approve transferring the \$74,581.00 “deferred inflows of revenue,” a part of the FY 2022 surplus, to the Ascutney Professional Building Fund to be used for renovations and maintenance of the buildings.
- b. *A motion was made by Joe Fromberger to transfer the \$74,581.00 of “deferred inflows of revenue” into the Building Fund. Peter Daniels seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.*
- c. Jason Rasmussen reported on the Building Committee’s recent conversations about uses for the old post office building. Peter Daniels advised that converting the old Post Office to an apartment is expected to be more beneficial than commercial/retail space. There is a lot of vacant commercial space in the area. There is a tremendous need for housing. Peter Daniels advised they could generate anywhere from \$900.00 to \$1500.00 a month if the Post Office is converted to a 1-bedroom apartment.

Draft

- d. Joe Fromberger advised it will take approximately 10 years to see any profit from a 1-bedroom apartment. He suggested a 2-bedroom apartment would be more beneficial.
 - e. Jason Rasmussen advised quotes are still being collected. It will be about \$4,200 to replace the heating system in the post office. To renovate the post office as an apartment, an electrician's quote was \$10,000. A contractor should provide a quote soon, and a plumber is meeting onsite and can provide a quote soon. Jason Rasmussen will meet again with the Building Committee when the quotes come in and can provide a more detailed estimate to the Board after that.
7. Brownfields
- a. Tom Kennedy advised the town would like to convert the old Cavendish town garage site to a community park. Peter Daniels advised that soils samples are needed.
 - b. *Peter Daniels made a motion to approve \$12,000.00 be appropriated from ACCD (Agency of Commerce and Community Development) funds for the testing. Joe Fromberger seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.*
 - c. Tom Kennedy reported that an individual has shown interest in buying and renovating the Academy Building in Cavendish into mixed housing and retail space. No request for funds is being made at this time, as the project is in the preliminary stages. It is expected there will be asbestos removal needed and a historical assessment is needed before any renovations can be made.
8. Old business
- a. There was no old business to discuss.
9. Adjourn
- a. *Kathy Rondeau made a motion to close the meeting at 1:30. Joe Fromberger seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Comstock