

**NVDA Town Plan Review Committee Hearing Minutes**  
**Regional Approval of Concord Town Plan**  
**Thursday, September 3, 2015 6:00 PM**  
**Concord Municipal Building, Concord Vermont**

From Town Plan Review Committee: Sten Lium, Concord; Jeanne Desrochers, Coventry; Paul Brouha, Sutton, Kenn Stransky, Norton

NVDA Staff: Alison Low

Representing Concord: Cynthia Stuart, Linda Hartwell, Alan Smith (Zoning Administrator), Stuart Gray, Judy Kurtz, Jim Gochie, Louis Brock

Prior to the opening of the hearing, the committee voted to have Jeanne Desrochers act as Chair. The hearing opened at 6:00 p.m.

Alison Low explained the purpose of regional approval of local plans as per 24 V.S.A. §4350. She mentioned that the plan was reviewed by staff and was found to contain all the required elements and was consistent with the State planning goals. She added that town plan approval by the regional planning commission was also required if the town wished to pursue Municipal Planning Grants or if the town were to pursue Village Center Designation. (The town has indicated an interest in pursuing Village Center Designation.)

The town plan approval committee asked if the plan was a minor or major update. Cynthia Stuart stated that it was not considered a major update, except that the flood resilient element – a new requirement – needed to be added, and information about the economy (for the town and region) had changed. Also, Cynthia talked about a broadly distributed community survey that guided the update process. About 700 copies of the survey were distributed, yielding about 200+ responses. She added that this survey was important in determining the four or five issues that were truly important to the community.

Paul Brouha stated that he appreciated the way the goals were clearly stated and objectives were time-limited. This approach may have benefitted Sutton's own planning efforts.

Jeanne Desrochers commended the planning commission on the nice look of the plan and public participation. Judy Kurtz added that she ended up joining the planning commission after participating in the planning process. Judy also commended Irene Nagle from NVDA for assisting the planning commission throughout the update.

Other comments:

Paul: Would have helped to include the zoning map. Also he expressed concern over the use of large-lot zoning, noting that this approach had not worked in Sutton. Cynthia replied that the next step is to revise the zoning bylaws.

Kenn Stransky: Has the planning commission given thought to how tuitioning students will impact the community? This could make the community a very desirable place to live, and the town might have to accommodate growth. Realtors will approach this town differently, and the town might see

more conversion of seasonal properties. Cynthia acknowledged that this might encourage more development, and that maybe camps could also become rental properties.

Paul: May want to look at riparian setbacks and reconcile it with what is (and isn't) addressed in the state shoreland legislation and in the local flood regulations.

Jeanne: It looks like there might be mountainous areas suitable for wind. It was noted that both the Sutton and Newark plans have language that address industrial scale. Paul concurred that the town appears to have very viable ridgelines. The issue of solar siting standards came up, and this is something that NVDA will have to address with their towns. Green hayfields can become solar farms very quickly. There are obvious places to site solar, such as adjacent to 3-phase power, and areas where visual impacts can be minimized.

Sten: The implementation section is very user friendly. Statistics on aging demographics are shocking. It was acknowledged that there is a need for senior housing – housing for people who want to remain in town but don't need all the space anymore. The group talked about Irasburg and its 8-unit senior housing development. Lack of off-site sewer and water in Concord is an issue, and Cynthia noted that the next step is to look at the sewer and water capacity.

Economics section: Contained an excellent analysis of what the hourly wage needs to be in order to afford housing. How many Burke and Newport area employees will be making enough to afford housing in Concord?

Lou Brock had two questions – one regarding the availability of three-phase power. Paul said that the cost of extending it is roughly 1 million per mile. Also, did Alison know why GMP was putting up poles in town? She did not.

Paul made a motion to recommend approval of the Concord Plan from the full board. Sten seconded the motion. The motion passed, with all voting in favor.

The hearing closed at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Low