

NVDA Hearing Minutes

Determination of Energy Compliance for the Municipal Plan of Holland

Monday, March 25, 2019 at 6:00 P.M.
Holland Town Offices, Holland, VT

Present: Alison Low, NVDA Staff; Diane Judd, Holland Town Clerk and Treasurer; Bill Crowley, Holland Planning Commission Chair

Note: The hearing was held in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4352. If the regional plan has received an affirmative determination of energy compliance for the regional plan, the municipal legislative body may submit its adopted municipal plan to the regional planning commission for a determination of energy compliance. The regional planning commission shall issue an affirmative determination, signed by the chair of the regional planning commission, on finding that the municipal plan meets the requirements and is consistent with the regional plan. This process includes a public hearing, warned at least 15 days out, with an electronic copy of the notice sent to the requesting community.

The hearing opened at 6:00 p.m., and Alison explained the process for determining energy compliance of a municipal plan. It was also noted that the Town of Holland's plan was already approved by the full board of NVDA on March 23, 2017.

Alison presented a copy of the enhanced energy planning checklist, which is used by regional planning commission staff to assist in determining whether a town has met the requirements of Act 174. She said the plan met all the requirements. She noted that one technical correction should be made to the energy maps: the 2,000 foot elevation layer (adopted as part of the regional plan) should be relabeled to read "Regional Constraint," rather than "Possible Constraint." The regional plan's land use plan states that those lands are unsuitable for commercial and industrial development (including utility scale energy). The reference to the regional layer should be corrected. This is considered a minor technical correction that does not require a plan amendment, since the maps are merely referring to the regional layer.

Bill wanted to know if the checklist should be appended to the plan. Alison said that it should not. It is simply uploaded, along with Holland's plan, on the NVDA web page for energy planning: <http://www.nvda.net/land-use-planning.php>

Alison asked for a clarification of the criterion 8A on the checklist, the transportation policy of "not discouraging new roads provided they are up to code." Diane explained that this policy requires developers to bring any new roads up to state standards, which has the effect of discouraging development away from areas already developed. She also noted that the town has a substantial amount of land enrolled in current use, as well as parcels with conservation easements. This too shapes development trends in Holland.

There was a discussion of the purpose of the enhanced energy plan and the role of "Substantial Deference" in the Section 248 process. It was noted that the Dairy Air wind proposal has been in play for about three years now.

Bill noted that Irene did a great job working with the Town of Holland on their plan, and they looked forward to working with her on the Municipal Planning Grant to identify potential uses for the Holland Elementary School Building.

The hearing closed at 6:35 p.m. Respectfully submitted,

Alison Low