

**NVDA Town Plan Review Committee Hearing Minutes
Regional Approval of Holland and Newark Town Plans
Thursday, February 2, 2017 at 5:30 P.M.
Brighton Town Hall, Island Pond, VT**

From Town Plan Review Committee: Sten Lium, Concord; Jeanne Desrochers, Coventry; Mike Metcalf, Greensboro; Justin Barton-Caplin, Barton.

NVDA Staff: Irene Nagle

Representing Holland Town: Andrew Bouchard, Holland Planning Commission

Representing Newark: Luke O'Brien, Chair; Kim Fried, Mark Whitworth, Newark Planning Commission. John Lewandowsky, Newark Selectboard

Prior to the opening of the hearing, the committee voted to have Sten Lium act as Chair. The hearing opened at 5:45 p.m.

Irene Nagle explained the purpose of regional approval of local plans as per 24 V.S.A. §4350. She mentioned that both Plans contained all the required elements and were consistent with the State planning goals.

First was the review of the Holland Town Plan.

Andrew Bouchard explained how the Planning Commission approached the Town Plan update. He noted that much of the information was carried forward from previous plans. He discussed the Planning Commission's focus on the energy section, in light of Act 174. He noted that the plan supports the diversification of agriculture, and noted that the Town Plan is intended as guidance, but is not expected to be implemented through zoning. It was noted that the public questionnaire indicated that both year-round and summer residents of Holland don't favor zoning.

The new energy potential maps, based on State data layers, were discussed and Andrew noted that the Town was seeking more specific data about wind speeds collected by a "Met" tower in Holland.

Andrew noted that the Town of Holland had 5 years ago started to discuss the possibility of a community-owned methane digester. Mike mentioned that a farm in Greensboro has a digester and there was a question as to how the property was assessed by the town. It was noted that the State has set standards for the assessment of renewable energy plants for the purposes of the State education tax, but the municipal tax portion is determined locally.

Luke asked Andrew if the Town had any contact with Canadian communities, and Andrew noted that he had been in contact with Everblue Massawippi, the Lake Massawippi watershed group.

Mike Metcalf made a motion to recommend the Holland Town Plan for Regional Approval of the full NVDA Board. Motion was second by Jeanne Desrochers and all voted in favor, motion passed.

Next was the review of the Newark Town Plan.

Luke O'Brien, Newark Planning commission Chair, described the Town's planning process and noted it was a major update. The Town hired an ecologist to undertake a natural resources survey, and that information informed the Plan. He noted that the community vision was revisited, and that

one of the biggest challenges was discussing where growth should occur. Luke noted that the “Priority Linkages” mapped by “Staying Connected,” included in the appendix to the Plan influenced land use, housing, and transportation goals in the Plan.

Jeanne commended the clarity of the standards set forth on pages 65-66, as well as the implementation table, which gave clear direction to the Town. She also commended the Plan’s consideration of downstream communities in the flood resilience plan.

Sten noted that the Town Plan is useful in setting the culture for the Town.

Jeanne Desrochers made a motion to recommend the Newark Town Plan for regional approval, which was seconded by Mike Metcalf. All voted in favor and the motion was passed.

A motion to adjourn the hearing was made by Jeanne Desrochers and seconded by Sten Lium, and the hearing was adjourned at about 6:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Nagle