

**Mount Ascutney
Regional Commission**

Minutes of Monday, March 20, 2023
Location: Martin Memorial Hall, Ascutney, VT
and via Zoom

Commissioners Present: Wayne Wheelock, Baltimore; Terry Carter, Ludlow; Joe Fromberger, Andover; Walter Martone, Springfield; Edwin Johnson, West Windsor (Alt.); Julie Hance, Chester; Peter Daniels, Weathersfield; and Tom Bock (At Large).

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

Others in Attendance: Brandon Gulnick, Ray Stapleton

Wayne Wheelock opened the meeting at 12:00 PM.

1. Changes to the Agenda
 - a. There were no changes to the agenda.
2. Secretary's Report
 - a. *Walter Martone made a motion to receive the minutes of the January 23, 2023 meeting as presented. Peter Daniels seconded the motion. Motion passed.*
3. Treasurer's Report
 - a. Jason Rasmussen pointed out the numbers appear a little on the negative side currently but this is due to the time of year and usually it corrects itself so it should not be concerning.
 - b. *Peter Daniels made a motion to receive the Treasurer's Report as presented. Julie Hance seconded the motion. Motion passed.*
4. Brownfields
 - a. Old Cavendish Town Garage (Rt 131)

Tom Kennedy reminded the board this is the site of the former town garage that burned down, and that the town of Cavendish wishes to turn the site into a park. He stated initial testing has come back, and high levels of PAH's and Thallium were found. Additional testing is needed to determine the extent of clean-up needed. He is asking the board to approve an additional \$ 19,750.00 from the Brownfield Program to complete additional testing at the site. He has presented the request to the Brownfield Steering Committee, and it is their recommendation that this request be approved.

Julie Hance made a motion to allocate \$19,750.00 from Brownfields Program Income to complete additional testing at the old Cavendish town garage site. Walter Martone seconded the motion. Motion passed.

b. Amend Brownfield Steering Committee Bylaws

Tom Kennedy reminded the board that the Brownfield Steering Committee had been authorized at a previous meeting, to fund assessments at a single site of up to \$10,000.00, without needing board approval. He wanted the board's opinion of whether the wording of the Bylaws needed to reflect this or is any allocations made being noted in the minutes enough.

Joe Fromberger stated he believes it should be noted in the bylaws.

Tom Kennedy stated, in order to add the wording to the bylaws, it will need to be warned for 30 days, then formally voted on by the full board. Tom Kennedy stated he would revise the bylaws and present them at the next available meeting, at which time they can be reviewed and voted on.

c. Appoint Brownfield Steering Committee Member Vacancies

Tom stated the Brownfield Steering Committee is having difficulty having the quorum needed to conduct business, due to vacancies on the committee. The Brownfield Steering Committee is requesting Walter Martone, with Jeff Mobus as an alternate, be appointed to the committee. He recognizes that, with Bob Flint also on the committee, it will be Springfield heavy, which is why Jeff Mobus would join as an alternate only.

Peter Daniels asked how many are on the committee at this time. Tom stated there are 5 members, at this time. Jason noted Etienne Ting is expected to be resigning from the MARC Board, and presumably the Brownfield Steering Committee as well, which will make it only 4 currently on the committee. Joe asked if the Bylaws state there needs to be a certain number. Tom Kennedy responded, no.

Peter Daniels made a motion to appoint Walter Martone and Jeff Mobus, as alternate, to the Steering Committee. Julie Hance seconded the motion. Motion passed.

d. The Levesque Property, in Windsor

Tom Kennedy reminded the board, the Levesque property is located behind the Mascoma Bank and is next to the Windsor Welcome Center. It is being proposed to be renovated to be used as a mixed use building, with commercial space on the first floor and housing units above.

Tom Kennedy stated the property is of great concern as previous testing had found PCB's in the soil near the parking lot and there was a PCE vapor plume that reached the water table on the East side that required installing vapor intrusion systems in the basements of some residences. Tom stated he was presenting this to the board to request an additional \$40,000 be allocated to the project to conduct a building assessment, collect soil samples and borings, and perform additional vapor tests.

Walter Martone asked if the Brownfield Steering Committee recommended the allocate of the additional money. Tom Kennedy stated this had not been presented to the Committee as yet. He felt, due to the urgency, and as most of the members of the committee were present at this meeting, that it should be presented at this meeting.

Walter Martone asked if the town of Windsor is aware of the issue. Tom Kennedy stated the town is aware and is supportive of the application. If additional vapor plumes are found, it may require additional vapor intrusion systems.

Joe Fromberger asked when the additional testing would be expected to take place. Tom Kennedy stated immediately. Joe Fromberger asked if this would need to go out to bid. Tom Kennedy stated the property is already under contract with VHB, so it would only require an amendment to the existing contract.

Walter Martone made a motion to allocate \$ 40,000.00 to the Levesque Property project to conduct additional testing. Peter Daniels seconded the motion. Motion passed.

5. Proposed Changes to Procurement Procedures

Jason Rasmussen reminded the board, by Federal law, we are required to have Procurement Procedures that are consistent with federal code, and that they should be reviewed periodically. He is requesting the board's approval to make revisions to the current procedures to bring them in line with current Federal and state requirements. Each year, MARC needs to certify that these procedures meet Federal requirements.

Walter Martone made the following comments:

- a. Section 3.0, 2 & 3: The wording should be changed to *he, she or they* and *he, she, or their partner*, to reflect current inclusive verbiage.
- b. Section H: Appears to have punctuation errors.
- c. Section M: Should it be noted only *Made in America* products should be purchased. Tom Bock pointed out this would make it difficult to purchase items that are not available in the US.
- d. Section D: The statement regarding conditions in sealed bids appears to have redundancy.
- e. Section A-E: should examples be given – like based on past experiences with contractor and bad references, etc.
- f. Section B, I.V.: Should state: *The most responsive proposal may not necessarily be the least costly and higher cost proposal may be approved, if the better choice*
- g. Section 6.0: Appears to have grammatical errors.

Jason advised he would review Walter's comments and would present additional changes at a future meeting.

6. Proposed Telecommunication Tower on Whitmore Brook Road, Chester.

Jason Rasmussen advised that he had received a packet from the applicant requesting approval to build a tower at the site. He has reviewed it with Preston, and the Zoning Administration, in Chester. Jason prepared a draft letter asking for additional information about the project and offering comments for consideration. The Permit Review Committee has seen the pre-application documentation and decided they did not need to meet before the Board meeting.

Joe Fromberger stated he had no objection to sending the letter as presented. Jason asked if a formal motion was needed or just consensus of the board. Julie stated she felt consensus was all that was needed. The board gave their approval. Jason will send the letter as it was presented.

7. Housing Project RFP

Jason reminded the board we are looking to implement the Keys to the Valley initiative. He advised that MARC is looking into an accessory dwelling unit/housing utility pilot in coordination with partners, including Two Rivers and Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC's. Jason stated there is money in the ACCD budget for a consultant. He indicated that MARC has released an RFP to conduct an inventory of housing development sites in our villages that are served by water and sewer. We are working with Springfield Regional Development Corp (SRDC) and the Windham and Windsor Housing Trust (WWHT) on this project. We are establishing a Selection Committee. Malia Cordero is the lead on this project. If anyone wants to be involved, either on the Committee or otherwise, please let Malia know.

When the project is over, we hope to work with SRDC and WWHT to help promote the list, which would give developers a tool to assist in finding the best sites ready to be developed.

Tom Bock asked how much money is available? Jason answered \$50,000.00 is in the budget for consulting services. Tom Bock asked if others would be contributing to the cost. Jason advised, if additional funds were needed to complete the project, we may ask towns to contribute.

8. New Business

There was no new business presented.

9. Old Business

Win Johnson asked about the status of the potential sale of the property at 20 and 38 Ascutney Park Road, where the offices of MARC are currently located. Jason advised that the Building Committee had recently met to prepare a written

statement of what they were hoping to get out of the potential sale. The buyer has not yet responded to it. Jason will follow up with him.

Jason mentioned that he had been contacted by a cannabis cultivator regarding renting the old Post Office building, at 20 Ascutney Park Road, and converting it into a grow facility. Jason is looking into whether this is a feasible proposal. He believes that it may not be something that MARC wants to pursue. Joe agreed, stating that we should sell the property, not seek rental opportunities.

Jason will provide additional details of whether this is something to further explore at the next meeting.

10. Adjourn

Joe Fromberger made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:06 pm. Walter Martone seconded the motion. Motion passed. Wayne called the meeting adjourned at 1:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Comstock