

Montpelier Planning Commission
April 14, 2008
City Council Chambers, City Hall

Subject to Review and Approval

Present: Mark Kaufman, Chair; Claire Benedict, David Borgendale, Anne Campbell, and Karen Vogan; also Youth Member Lucia Bragg.
Staff: Gwendolyn Hallsmith, Director of Planning & Community Development and Clancy DeSmet, Planning and Zoning Administrator

Call to Order: Chair, Mark Kaufman called the Montpelier Planning Commission to order at 7:06 P.M. on April 14, 2008.

Review of Minutes: Claire Benedict moved approval of the minutes, with Anne Campbell seconding the motion. The March minutes were approved.

Welcome to New Member: Mr. Kaufman welcomed Karen Vogan as a new member of the Montpelier Planning Commission. Ms. Vogan said she had spent the last five years working in downtown Montpelier and has recently started working with the Vermont Natural Resources Council and Local First Vermont. The work she does with those two organizations motivated her to get more involved in planning and city government.

Youth Member Lucia Bragg said she was a student activist and be out in the community and be a part of it. It always feels good to have a say in what is going on from a youth standpoint. She is involved with Vermont Family Initiative, and they are in favor of renewable resources. She is a sophomore at Montpelier High School. Mr. Kaufman said it is exciting from an organizational standpoint to have them here. It was wonderful on the Economics and Livelihood Committee they had several members from Montpelier High School who had some really great input and goals for the committee. These are thoughtful, well considered individuals.

Orientation for New Members: Ms. Hallsmith prepared notebooks that could be used as resource materials on zoning and the master plan. The notebooks included the rules and procedures of the Planning Commission, which describes who the members are, how they are appointed, what their duties are, and how to vote. A question had come up in a previous meeting about whether or not when you had a simple quorum of four members if a majority of that quorum constituted a passed vote. Both the Secretary of State's Office and the rules and procedure are pretty clear on that. If all you have is a quorum at a meeting, then the majority of the quorum is not enough. You need all four to be a unanimous vote for whatever the item is to pass. You need the majority of the board no matter what the vote is, and a majority of this board is four members. If you make a motion and only four members are present, then you need to pass it unanimously. If five members are present, it still needs to be four out of five. The youth members do not change that necessity because by law they don't count toward a quorum. Their votes can't be used to count toward a quorum or to break a tie, but their votes will be recorded.

The next section describes what your legal responsibilities are and what the State of Vermont charges the Planning Commission with, and what your powers and duties are. The state legislation that established the planning commission also has in it a number of different goals for planning, including goals quite similar to what you might see in a smart growth initiative where we want to have more compact development and less sprawl, have the infrastructure and services that cities offer remain a relatively low cost because they are concentrated in a smaller area. She recommended they review some of the goals

that the state sets for planning commissioners and they will see that a lot of the issues they are covering in the enVision Montpelier process are mentioned. Some of the goals listed are:

- To encourage the efficient use of energy and the development of renewable energy resources;

- To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for Vermont residents and visitors;
- Strategies to protect the long term viability of agriculture and forest land should be encouraged;
- The use of locally grown food products should be encouraged.
- To broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to insure the full realization of the abilities of all Vermonters.

In a lot of these state mandated goals for the Planning Commission's work you can see some of the things we are considering in the different committees of the enVision Montpelier process.

One of the key roles of planning commissioners is to prepare the municipal plan. The municipal plan is a policy document that basically sets out the goals and priorities for the city over a longer term period of time than just the current year. With the enVision Montpelier project we are looking 30 to 100 years out to try and get a sustainable municipal plan for the city because one of the key considerations in sustainability is looking at the long term and looking at what is good for future generations rather than just considering what is going to be good for the next 3 to 5 years, which is the typical planning horizon for most municipalities in Vermont. One of the outcomes of the enVision Montpelier project will be an updated municipal plan for the City of Montpelier, which is really one of the Planning Commission's key responsibilities. That is why in the enVision Montpelier process each Planning Commissioner has taken responsibility for one of the committees. The Planning Commission serves as a co-chair of each of the enVision Montpelier committees in consultation with one of the other members from the committees that the committees elected. Claire has been serving as the co-chair of the Human Development Committee. Mark has been serving as the co-chair of the Economics and Livelihood Committee. Ann is the co-chair of the Social Systems Committee. Some of the missing members at the moment serve on some of the other committees, but as new members they get the choice of the committees they want to participate on. There is the Natural Environment, the Built Environment and Infrastructure, and Governance. They could start by going to each of them and seeing which one interests them. That is part of how enVision Montpelier has been structured to enable us to move forward with a master plan in sort of an organized way where each of the Planning Commissioners has very specific portfolios. The schedule of meetings is put out by the Vista volunteers and is on the web site.

The next section of the Orientation Manual is the ethics policy of the city which also applies to Planning Commissioners. This to works to make sure that if a Planning Commissioner has any financial interest in any of the decisions that are being made that it is important that you both disclose that financial interest and recuse yourself from those decisions.

Also attached is the Master Plan which was adopted by the City of Montpelier in 2006, and the second is the zoning and subdivision regulations that were adopted by the city in 2006. the Master Plan which was adopted in 2006 was not really a complete revision of the Master Plan. In fact, there hasn't been a thorough revision of the Master Plan with full community involvement really for some time, and that is part of the motivation for the enVision Montpelier project because they needed to reach out to the whole community and get them involved. Calling it something new and structuring some new activities around what was going on were designed to get people interested in it. If you just talk about master planning, that sounds pretty boring to most people. Thinking about a long term vision for the city, trying to get younger people involved so we have a sense of what is good for future generations is a little more interesting and exciting than traditional master planning.

The update done in 2006 basically just readopted the plan from 2000 with some minor adjustments to the data. Occasionally in the document you will see Gwen has made some notes about looking somewhere else for the data and you can find updated charts in the addenda attached to the Master Plan. The Master

Plan contains a lot of data, which is information about the city, and it also contains goals, strategies and objectives to try and make sure the plan is implemented. The zoning and subdivision regulations are also

the responsibility of the Planning Commission. Once we finish the Master Plan, revising these is the Planning Commission's next job. Those are really two of the main things that the Planning Commission, writing the Master Plan and writing the zoning and subdivision regulations along with doing studies. Right now the City Council wants the Planning Commission to come up with a Mobility Plan for the city that starts to look at the data and information we have gathered on transportation. That is sort of a mini plan that is going to feed into the Master Planning process, but it is another plan that the Planning Commission can do in the course of their work to help the city understand both the data and the needs that the city has for different kinds of issues.

The expectation of Planning Commissioners because of all of this is that they attend the regular Planning Commission meetings and the stakeholder meetings of the enVision Montpelier Project. The next stakeholder meeting is May 7th. The next thing they will be unveiling at the May meeting is the first draft vision statement.

The next Steering Committee meeting is April 29th. The Steering Committee was first comprised of two Planning Commission members, who included the Chair, and the elected chairs of each of the subcommittees of enVision Montpelier, and three City Council members. Their responsibilities have been to make sure that the public participation efforts they have been making are broad enough and have tried to hit a lot of the different communities around the city, and they have also been responsible for reviewing the applications for the Mazer grants the city has been able to give out. There have been about 500 surveys returned with what people really want for the future in this city, so the Steering Committee is looking at what everybody is saying on those surveys and make sure they are captured in a vision for the city.

Betsy Rosenbluth, Orton Family Foundation:

Betsy Rosenbluth presented some slides who explained who the Orton Family Foundation is and how they got to Heart and Soul Community planning. Their mission is to work with communities and they hope then to articulate, implement and steward the community's heart and soul assets, those things that residents of a community find the most if they were gone. They might be economic or environmental built or natural environment. They might also be customs or traditions in the town, or the ways that the community comes together.

The Orton Family Foundation works both in New England and the Rocky Mountain West. She mentioned small cities and towns under 50,000 has been their guideline. They are an operating foundation so they really work as partners with communities who want to learn with them. They work on building capacity and leadership, both in the non-profit organizations and local governments.

The Orton Family foundation was started by the family of Lyman Orton whose family owns Vermont Country Store down in Weston. Lyman went away to college and came back as a young man and recruited very early to be on the Planning Commission. There was a proposal in the small town of Weston, Vermont for an exotic animal park and bringing in these exotic animals at the elevation of 2,000 to 3,000 feet on a ridge completely divided the town. There was nothing in the Master Plan they could hold on to; nobody thought of that. The process was difficult. People couldn't visualize what it was they did want. They just had the Master Plan they had worked on. Even though the proposal eventually changed and became an animal park with animals a little more able to live in that climate, they opened and went out of business six months later. Really, the wounds of that conflict in town lasted much, much longer.

That personal experience of Lyman led him to really start thinking about how you can help citizen planners really visualize what these decisions are and what the consequences of these decisions are, and what the choices are. This was right when Sin City, this great game, came out and some other technology. The foundation is only about 12 years old. This when it started to develop some of these

visualization tools to help Planning Commissions and planners and boards to support their decision making. The Foundation also worked on a lot of support tools. There is a book, "Hands on the Land,"

that is used in a lot of schools on the natural history of Vermont. They developed computer software Community Viz, which is GIS based software that allows communities to visualize build out and the impacts and consequences of different scenarios. There was a community video program to try to get community members out telling stories, creating video and sharing that. They published a book on community mapping, again in connection with local schools and getting young people involved.

Ms. Rosenbluth said the Foundation also worked with communities and provided technical assistance in their planning process. They would get invited in to work with communities in the middle of a process and find that when it came to adopting the zoning or implementing a regulation there was a lot of pushback. All of a sudden the people who really never came out in developing some of those plans really had a lot to say at that point when it was very concrete and in front of them. Their partnership with communities really needs to start in the beginning and work together on a very robust citizen engagement. How do we really reach people? What motivates them? The Foundation in the last year has been building this methodology of looking at the heart and soul of the community how do you really engage people to talk about what they care about most, how to translate that into actionable plans, and how do you account that over time.

Lyman was down in Austin, Texas and read an editorial in the paper. The editorial was about the rising housing crisis, like most of us see, and pricing so many people out of the market in Austin. It was pricing all of the musicians out of the market in Austin, but Austin's whole popularity was from this amazing music scene. That article talked about the heart and soul of Austin being the music scene and musicians and what were we doing not looking forward and providing some stability for what that town is really all about. That brought him and the Foundation back again to this whole notion of heart and soul community planning.

They are in the learning process on this, but they are developing ways and working with communities to explore and articulate what is their common ground and what do people feel most connected to in their place and to each other in a community, and then how to articulate that in that community.

There is also a story telling component. The whole notion of expressing stories and building some trust and mutual understanding and hear peoples' aspirations for the future and being able to embrace that is a part of the process. Take those values and build a vision for the future. Based on those values, be able to look at how to implement those and visualize them and look at the consequences of different future directions.

Develop actionable plans – they are working with communities instead of a short time frame of a year but two to three years and implement along the way so as emerging issues come forward be able to resolve those and build the momentum. It's really a living document and something that can impact community members' lives right away.

Heart and soul planning looks different in every community, and there is a lot to learn from each other. In some communities having committees that continually monitor progress is really important. How do you report back on a regular basis? How do you use these heart and soul values in this vision as a touch stone for decision making, or a hand rail as you move through the various decisions about the future of your community? The most difficult one is how to continue the participation from the community past this exciting planning stage to implementing and paying attention and keeping the dialogue over a longer period of time.

The Orton Family Foundation does have projects underway. She talked to Gwen about a request for proposals that was issued this winter and they are in the process of reviewing those applications. They are learning a lot from both the communities they will select as well as those they didn't select and what support is important. There will be two communities in New England to announce in June as well as two out west. They also have an interesting project in what is called the Borderlands, which is on the Rhode Island/Connecticut border where there are critical natural areas there. It is a partnership between the Nature Conservancy and the Rhode Island Economic Policy Council. That partnership will continue with

the partnerships of the banks, and some of the private sector. It is a very interesting partnership to look at with two villages, one in Rhode Island and Connecticut, in terms of channeling growth in village centers and conserving critical lands on the outside. One of the towns has no town center and a very rural area facing extreme growth and they are working on a new town center. The other is a very historic mill town center. Foxwoods Casino is the growth and has a huge impact. They are trying to engage folks and talk about their future.

There is a project out in Routt County in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. They have had probably 1,000 people participate in some of their surveys talking about what they care most in the valley. There is a project in Maine working with Growth Smart Maine on a model town to implement a village master plan to develop and conserve some of the open space and engage youth in that process. There is a project where they are looking at the arts. They will be picking a Vermont town in Addison County as a pilot and then broaden that program. Using an artist in residence as well as arts within the community and the schools to talk about what they value most, what they want to hold on to, and what is the future of their community, and has that community dialogue as part of that artistic process.

Ms. Rosenbluth showed a slide depicting a chip game at a table deciding where development should happen and that gets translated into plans. This means at a meeting every voice is equal and you see the results very quickly. There are ways that the Orton Foundation tries to help communities with participation and some of the decision support. Some communities do very well with an on-line dialogue. A lot of other communities have spaghetti dinners.

The Foundation this year has an on-line tool to evaluate some of the impacts of big box development. She knows with enVision Montpelier there is such an effort engaging a large number of people who work in and live and visit Montpelier. It is very important for the Foundation to continually to work on how to successfully have people be part of that process and own that process, because they will never get to successful implementation or long term stewardship if we don't have that trust in the process.

The Foundation held a conference this fall, Community Matters Conference, in Burlington and will host another one out west in another year. Jim Surowiecki is the Business Writer for the *New York Times*, who wrote a book called The Wisdom of Crowds. It is a fun read about comparing the advice of an expert with the advice of this random and diverse crowd, and over time for the last 500 years the wisdom of that crowd has been more dead on than the best experts.

The last tool in development right now is called "Community Almanac." For a lot of communities that want to share photos of a favorite place, short video, audio interview with someone about the town, they are creating an open source mapping program. That should be developed by the summer and available to communities.

Ms. Rosenbluth said she looks forward to learning from the Planning Commission as well as ways to help support what is happening. The office is located in Middlebury.

Mr. Kaufman asked if the Community Viz software is through sales subscription or only with program lease.

Ms. Rosenbluth said it is for sale. It used to be in-house. The Foundation developed it and sold it, and that was an awkward relationship. They spun off an organization that now sells and supports it, and they brought the price down to between \$200 and \$500 to make it as accessible as possible. You need some data and GIS capability.

Mr. Kaufman asked if she saw a general threshold of minimum participation that means success or not success for programs. Ms. Rosenbluth said they had been wrestling with that. Is there a percentage of?

population or magic number? She doesn't have an answer to that. Diversity is sometimes more important than sheer numbers. The Foundation has very basic evaluation tools which measures numbers,

number of new people and how diverse the stakeholders are. When she hears there are 1,000 people participating, she is excited about whether that town is 5,000 or 40,000 because that is a high number. Has it increased from the past?

Ms. Hallsmith said a way she has evaluated that is to look at the basic return on direct mail. If you send out a direct mail solicitation, you can usually expect between 1 and 2 percent return. If you send out 100 direct mail flyers you can expect 2% back, which is good. A 2 percent return is good.

In Calgary where they were doing a project they had 20,000 people participate in the visioning process, but it is a city of 1 million people. You are looking at 20,000 people actually participating, if you look at the direct mail numbers, then you can arguably say that a million people did have the opportunity to participate to get that 20,000 number. Here in Montpelier with 8,000 people we are running better than 2 percent, more like 3 percent. If you have achieved that 2 percent level, then you can make a case for the fact that you certainly made it possible for everybody to participate because you are showing the return on having contacted the full population. Here we have sent out a mailing to everybody on the grand list, have gone to different organizations and events, surveys on the street corner and visited the high school. The VISTA volunteers have set up tables with visioning materials at the soup kitchens and church coffee hours all over town. Everybody in town has had the opportunity to participate and we have achieved a greater than 2 percent return. The opportunity is really more important in many ways than the actual participation.

Ms. Rosenbluth said someone in Vergennes on the Planning Commission took a digital picture of people in the store and asked them what they loved about Vergennes. They had a huge participation. Those measures are trends. Will those same people come out when it times to implement and take action? For them it is a great beginning to a process.

Ms. Hallsmith asked when she is looking for indicators of heart and soul, what does she mean by that?

Ms. Rosenbluth said they have the heart and soul movement, and then there is always the question of how do you know those values are making a difference, and how do you know that your actions are putting that on the ground into play. What kind of data should we look at? How do we measure that over time in a way that is meaningful and people can use that information to feel like they are moving in the direction they set course on or not?

Ms. Hallsmith said she was referring to heart and soul. How do you get to what people really care about? How do you find an indicator that shows you really hit the nail on the head in terms of what people care about?

Ms. Rosenbluth said in a lot of places the first conversation is what they care about is the small town feel and friendliness, and I like that I can stop my truck in the middle of the road and have a conversation with my neighbors. How do you translate that into zoning? How do you measure that over time?

Ms. Hallsmith said one of the questions the group has deals with the implementation question. There is a sentiment here that in the past the Planning Commissions worked hard to come up with some of these policies and plans and then they are systematically ignored by the implementing bodies at times. How do you make sure that the plan that is adopted, even after it is adopted by the City Council, is actually implemented? In the past couple of months we have had this mobility issue under way where they are thinking hard about mobility in the city. At least the preliminary results they have had would indicate that the majority of the people who filled out the survey are really interested in Montpelier dedicating more of our resources to pedestrian and other low impact forms of transportation. If you look at the city budget you can see that is not the way the budget plays out. The budget is dedicated to automobile transportation to roads and bridges and not bicycle, pedestrian or transit. How do you get from that vision or goals that seem to be shared by the whole community, especially on difficult issues like that, and translate it into resource allocation?

Ms. Rosenbluth said there is no easy answer. She said from their experience having as many of those folks involved in that process and owning the plan helps. Is the City Council or Select Board involved in that planning process? Are the major landowners and developers involved? They are really looking at ways to implement as you go so there isn't a disconnect between the finish of the plan and then start the implementation. How do you integrate that a little better? Again, it has to do with how diverse the participation is. How do you also create a process that just doesn't look at city government to solve it but gets the group excited in sharing that implementation? How do you continue that citizen participation so there is some accountability so it isn't just the Planning Commission having a conversation with the Council about what happened in the budgeting process? The reality is that it is difficult with political bodies turning over. The more you can diversify that ownership the better that can continue beyond an election cycle. So many communities and Montpelier isn't exempt from that, are subject to regional forces or state actions, and that's harder. You can control locally and do a lot, but then you also have regional forces.

Ms. Hallsmith said she and Betsy worked on the Burlington Legacy Project together. What is the biggest success of the Legacy Project in terms of getting it implemented? It was adopted back in 1999 or 2000, so it has been eight years. What real results have we seen from that project?

Ms. Rosenbluth said that was a great success of implementation. There were approximately 40 actions so they aren't all going to be implemented immediately. The stakeholder group that created the plan agreed to continue and totally focus on implementation, and that changed from the CEO's of the hospital and UVM to down to more of the program staff level, but that worked. They were very strategic each year in picking off a small number, communicating results annually and involving the youth. They had huge success with the Legacy Project with involving youth and students really weighing in what they care about in the future. They didn't want to lose that so they put youth on city commissions and boards and started a curriculum in the schools because the superintendent was involved. Not they are talking about entire magnet school focused on sustainability in Burlington. It isn't only because of Legacy, but the momentum and the partnerships created were able to continue. It's the same with food. There is a huge farm to table program. It was a very strategic issue and people cared about it and showed up at the meetings and said it was a priority. Once you see results, then the movement happens.

Ms. Hallsmith said keeping the stakeholders involved over the long term was an important element to that. Ms. Rosenbluth said they had commitments in writing and letters from all of the stakeholders saying what they would do to take action, so that was from city departments and hospital and University of Vermont who have huge influence on the city. Engaging very quickly an implementation so the public sees that in fact and will things happen. Make sure you implement things that can have results. Changing school food can seem daunting, but in fact once you have the right people involved you can do it. Huge regional transportation issues we didn't take on, even though they are pressing issues.

Ms. Bragg said she said how important it was to include the community so there is knowledge in the crowd. How do you spark that initial interest in what you are doing?

Ms. Rosenbluth said they need to go out to where people are.

Eric Gilbertson, member of the Design Review Committee, asked Ms. Rosenbluth if they had ever done any regional or multiple communities planning.

Ms. Rosenbluth said Rutland County is a county effort. When they developed the Request for Proposals they decided particularly to focus on towns, even though they promote regional sharing and collaboration, because the implementation is so much harder on a county level. They are right now focused on a county

level and using that for some regional sharing events and dialogue. They might for the next round venture to take on a regional project if there is a common identity and confidence that implementation can actually happen. actually, a lot of their partners really focus on regional collaboration and regional

projects and have requested the Orton Foundation to do that. They want results in a pretty quick time frame of two to three years. Mr. Gilbertson said this is a follow-up question to the Home Depot development where there are really three communities that were impacted, Barre, Montpelier and Berlin. One of the things that the organization that led the charge on Home Depot was that further economic development that is of a more appropriate scale. The Barre-Montpelier Road connects the three communities. How do we build a community between the two cities and a town?

Ms. Rosenbluth said that is a great example of a project that would be of interest where there are two or three towns coming together and have a lot more at stake when they compete with each other. Ms. Rosenbluth asked what Montpelier's success has been with enVision Montpelier. What has been exciting in terms of people turning out or new faces? What are your hopes for that process?

Ms. Campbell said the most exciting thing for her has been the start-up of the Onion River Exchange Time Bank which began at the very beginning of the enVision Montpelier process. She is co-chair of the Social Systems Committee. The Social Systems Committee jumped on that idea the first month they met and were eager to implement that piece. They submitted a proposal to the Steering Committee for a portion of the Mazer Foundation grant which enabled them to hire a coordinator and begin the startup. It is phenomenally successful. The most exciting thing is that in just the first three months of operation it is so stimulating in building community connections and ties.

Ms. Hallsmith said having the Mazer grant funding has been great. The city received a \$100,000 grant at the outset when the project started. They received the grant to implement the things that the stakeholders came up as part of the process. The Onion River Exchange was one thing. An energy materials coop was another. We supported the Montpelier Community Justice Center. They are now entertaining grant proposals for a whole batch of new ideas. They are trying to use the Capitol City Challenge and get sponsorships of that to add to the grant fund. It helps not to be just planning but implement as you go.

Ms. Campbell said as a Planning Commissioner for a number of years that just getting so much broader based input and not just the usual suspects has been really exciting. She is really appreciating the power of things like a design charette. The amount of progress that can be made in one-half day of a group of people getting together that we as Planning Commissioners can spend years spinning their wheels on and it is so advantageous to get large public output instead of speculating what people might want and what is good for the community.

Ms. Hallsmith asked what Ms. Rosenbluth thought was one of the big challenges of the Legacy Project. The growth goal was one of the challenges.

Ms. Rosenbluth said Burlington never had consensus around growing. Chittenden County is growing so fast, and Burlington's population stayed the same. Legacy was to talk about if you don't want sprawl we need to channel growth and channel it appropriately. The dialogue was to push that issue a little bit more. When push came to shove, each neighborhood project continues to get appeal. The zoning, for various reasons, was a disaster in the city. It's a reminder that it is an ongoing process. Taking the time to understand peoples' reactions to some of the density and growth issues is important.

Ms. Campbell asked what town in Maine the Orton Foundation was working with. Ms. Rosenbluth replied Standish, Maine, and they are just getting going. That's a tricky project because it's sort of a hold over from coming in mid way. They did their comprehensive plan with an incredibly dedicated small number of people and now they are trying to implement it. Now they are trying to back

off and do a more participatory process for implementation. They are very excited about using Community Viz just so people can visualize the options for growth in the village center. It will be interesting to see how well they can collaborate with the Turnpike Authority and Department of Transportation, which are tough partners. In the Border Lands they have a group out of Boston called Consensus Building Institute, and there are others, that are an essential part of building consensus where there are sometimes old wounds or just divisiveness in towns.

Mr. Kaufman thanked Ms. Rosenbluth for her presentation and said he looks forward to talking with her again on these issues. It's nice to see these things happening elsewhere.

Ms. Hallsmith invited the Orton Family Foundation to be a sponsor of their Capitol City Challenge.

Ms. Rosenbluth said at their conference there were 300 people in attendance and they ended up developing a Declaration of Community Heart and Soul beliefs based on the people who were there. It is a collaborative process of what is this movement and how can they implement traditional land use planning.

Solar Power Zoning Standards:

Clancy DeSmet, Planning and Zoning Administrator, said currently there is an exemption for solar collectors outside the Design Control District if they are less than 10 feet in height. If you want to install a solar collector within the Design Control District, of which there has only been one application, one of the biggest concerns the Design Review Committee has is that if you locate a solar collector on the primary façade of a building it would impede the aesthetics of it. His issue is that he sees any mitigation on solar collectors as an impediment to its function. He definitely respects the design review criteria, but he wants to make it easier for people to be able to do energy efficiency within the Design Control District. He solicited comments from members of the Design Review Committee. They wanted to do an administrative approval of some sort, i.e., if it was flushed with the roof plane or recessed from the edge of the roof it wouldn't have to go to the DRC. They want to revise the ordinance so if somebody wants to install a solar collector they won't necessarily have to attend a hearing with the DRC. He can administratively approve it with the criteria. There are already exemptions and things the ordinance allows the Administrative Officer to do. He just wants it spelled out a little more clearer. He thinks his colleagues on the Design Review Committee have faith in his ability to decide whether that will happen, but he wants their input on how it reads in the regulations.

Eric Gilbertson from the Design Review Committee said the problem with this is that the vast majority of the installations are not a problem if you put solar collectors on top of a flat roof building downtown. If somebody decides they want to put solar collectors on the south face of a mansard roof across the front of it, there is a problem. If you mount solar collectors on the flat side of a roof, even if it faces the street, it is probably okay. If you decide you need to tip those collectors so they are facing south more, then you get a saw tooth look, and it's a problem. It becomes a judgment call on whether it obscures the architectural features of the building. That question may be how visible it is to the public. Where is it located? What part of the building is it located on? If it goes unregulated, there is an opportunity for some really bad things to happen. He feels confident as one member of the Design Review Committee that Clancy would catch those. The issue is, how do you articulate that so there are some guidelines for it?

Mr. Kaufman said they should look at the ordinance. Clancy said they should start with page 3-5. Under Section 305 (c), proposals that require design review:

No structure may be erected, reconstructed, substantially altered, restored, moved or demolished without review of the design plans by the DRC and approval by the DRB. It can be an exempt activity, or a permit can be issued by the process that it outlines.

When you get down to 305 (c)(4), it talks about things that are exempt. The catch-all is non-substantial alterations. An Administrative Officer could say that a solar collector is a non-substantial alteration.

Mr. Kaufman asked how they determine what a non-substantial alteration involving a solar panel really is. Is it based on sight lines? Is it based on percentage of the unit that is readily visible from normal street access? On one hand he would hate to see us as a city saying essentially no to solar, and he knows it is almost a moot point. There has only been one application in whatever number of years.

Mr. DeSmet said it has been a blanket exemption in the rest of the city. Ms. Hallsmith replied it is exempt from zoning in all but the Design Review District.

Ms. Hallsmith said given the way energy prices are going and the different kinds of energy we need to look at as a city that we do need to think hard about automatically assuming it's a problem. For example, the idea of a solar collector on a south facing mansard roof, if that is the only place the family can put the solar collector and the solar collector is a way for them to get possibly the only kind of alternative or renewable energy they could have access to, are we going to unilaterally continue to say no and that the architectural features are more important than affordable energy for that household. When you decide that architectural features are high enough priority for the city that it would trump solar collectors in a decision where the two issues were in conflict you are making a value decision. You are making a choice as a city to prioritize one thing over the other. She is in complete agreement with the prioritization of the historical character of the city and historical features, but she also recognizes there may be times when those characteristics come in conflict with some other really high priorities.

Ms. Campbell said potentially increasingly so is energy efficiency as costs rise. She said she doesn't know enough about the technology to know whether or not those two needs are necessarily in conflict. Are we saying that a homeowner with a mansard roof is only alternative is that slanted solar collector south facing on the front of the mansard. Could it be placed to the back?

Mr. Gilbertson said he was envisioning covering up the mansard with it. Most mansards have a relatively flat roof and face themselves toward the back of the building. There are probably other solutions. Is every solution going to provide the maximum possible efficiency? Probably not. Are you still going to allow it to happen? He was using a really exaggerated example. He thinks the number of times that somebody is going to be denied access to solar collectors is going to be really minimal. Some of the things that come up in design review you wouldn't think people would propose. He thinks about the glass enclosure on 138 Main Street, and that was for energy efficiency. The DRC looks at windows all of the time, which are an energy issue, and there is always going to be a compromise.

Ms. Hallsmith said there is a slight difference between the airlocks, windows and solar collectors. Airlocks and windows as long as you get in advance of them and make sure you are designing them properly you can do it right and keep consistent with the design review guidelines. Sometimes with solar collectors she can imagine that is just not going to be the case.

Mr. Borgendale said one of the things that bothered him was the reference in 2 (b) that talks about an exemption if it meets the criteria of Section 306 (b)(4). If you look at Section 306 (b)(4), it would seem that would exempt solar collectors across the board from the Design Review Committee all together. There are no design review restrictions on solar collectors.

Mr. Kaufman said he and Clancy had both discussed that the ordinances say there isn't and the Zoning Administrator has the final say. What he doesn't want to have happened is an argument over the concept. Mr. Borgendale agreed. Mr. Borgendale said that economic pressures have a great deal of influence on how a community views these kinds of things. It is inevitable that energy is not going to be cheap like it has been, and probably never again in our lifetime. That is going to change community perspectives on how we decide what is more affordable and what looks good. It is good idea for us to address that for that reason.

Mr. Gilbertson said one comment he would make on terms of process. There is a process in place to review projects from design review and advisory to the Development Review Board that to one extent or another balances community interests. There is a potential for something that can damage the interest in historic buildings in the city in design review. All they are saying is it should drop into the process and then it moves forward to the Development Review Board can review that, and ultimately the City Council. It is really not a decision on whether to eliminate solar from the design review, but a decision to eliminate the ugly ones from design review and put them into the process.

Mr. Kaufman said he agreed with that completely, especially in light of enVision. At the kickoff event at the Farmers' Market one of the top things that community members were saying they loved about Montpelier was the historic nature of our downtown areas. That is obviously important to the community, and that means it needs to be important to us, both as members of the community and members of the Planning Commission. Are we looking at something that really doesn't need to be a problem at all?

Mr. DeSmet said he wasn't saying it is a problem. When the project came in with solar panels he can't say he didn't hope it wasn't in the Design Control District. Not for the fact he didn't think they would do a good job at it, but when he looks at 305 (f) and the review criteria solar collectors are not going to have harmony of exterior design with other properties in the district. They are not going to preserve or reconstruct the appropriate historic style. His heart dropped when he saw that someone wanted to do this and got a grant from the federal and state governments he didn't know what was going to happen. It just happened that it was on a building that wasn't facing an area that people would see it, so it was fine.

Ms. Hallsmith said they aren't suggesting that the Design Review Committee doesn't do a really good job in reviewing things. The letter of the law is such that it is difficult to squeeze solar collectors through the criteria. There are other exemptions for other pieces of equipment that are required for their function.

James Duggan, an alternate member of the Design Review Committee, said one thing is important is to think about is that what they are contemplating now is dealing with the technology available in this present moment, and already new technologies are emerging. There are little solar collectors that can be put on a slate roof and does that replicate historic material as well. Energy is a concern. He believes anybody who is going to be looking to install this as a retrofit that price is probably at the forefront of their mind anyway. Any time you have a fixed placement you are going to be reducing the efficiency of that particular unit. It has to be on a case by case process. It isn't just for how to preserve the historical integrity, but also what kind of performance you are going to receive for the installation of that particular technology in that application. He would agree with Eric that at some point there should be a process that kicks in that makes it a little easier to navigate. Are there any exemptions for wind turbines? On the waterfront in Burlington there are a couple of buildings that utilize roof mounted wind turbines to generate electricity, and that's a different setting than downtown Montpelier. That is another technology we could see popping up which would change the context as you look out. Instead of seeing a lot of spires of the churches we would have equally tall wind turbines. That needs to be considered at a certain point.

Mr. Borgendale said on this issue given what the law as expressed in the ordinance is the difficulty here is that if any solar panel application were denied because of design review it would be very much subject to legal challenge and the city would lose in attempting to enforce any type of restriction. On the wind turbine issue, that is basically beyond the municipality's control because if you are selling power back to the grid and your turbine is 20 feet or less, then the municipality may not place zoning restrictions on the placement of such a device period. That is a matter of state law.

Mr. Kaufman asked for a couple of recommendations of where they should do with this issue now.

Ms. Vogan said what she has been hearing at the State House with bills trying to move forward are goals for the entire State of Vermont to get more of its energy from renewable sources. She thinks the City of Montpelier is likely to fall under the same goals, and it is probably a good time to take some positive action that puts the city in the same direction as the rest of the state. She would suggest writing in something that makes it very clear not only do we support solar power in the city but we want to encourage it as well.

Ms. Campbell asked if it would be useful to Clancy if the ordinance is written so that solar is exempt in design control district so long as it does not obstruct the architectural integrity of the building. Or, is that already accomplished in the ordinance as it is written? Mr. DeSmet said non-substantial alterations are a catch-all. There was no question about the application he received that he was sending it to the Design

Review Committee. He looked at the ordinance. If he knew it wasn't going to be a problem and he could have issued a permit in-house, it would have been better.

Ms. Campbell asked why he knew the application would go to the DRC.

Mr. DeSmet said because of 305 (c)(1), a structure may be substantially altered, restored.

Ms. Kaufman asked if in his professional opinion that the application was a substantial alteration.

Ms. Hallsmith said a solar panel is a structure under the zoning.

Ms. Campbell asked if the ordinance was rewritten to say so long as it does not interfere with the architectural integrity. Mr. DeSmet said something like that would make it more comfortable if the applicant didn't need to go to a hearing. He wants to make it easy for the public, but he also wants to take into account the people who are members of the Design Review Committee and have an interest in the preservation or construction of historic style. We need a balance.

Ms. Campbell said if 305 (c)(4)(b) were rewritten to say "changes in use that do not cause any exterior changes in the appearance of the building or lot that do not compromise the architectural integrity of the building."

Ms. Hallsmith said what they might be looking for is a special statement about solar panels. She hears Eric saying he isn't comfortable with it being exempt, so it wouldn't go under (4) at all. It's a non-substantial alteration and goes through an administrative review.

Mr. Gilbertson said he understands Clancy's issue with this but also wants to follow upon something the chair said, that we have had one application. It is not an unreasonable burden on the Design Review Committee to look at one application for solar panels a year. If we looked at as many solar panels as they look at signs, it would be different.

Mr. Borgendale said he believes there is a good chance they will be looking at more of them. Ms. Campbell agreed.

Mr. Gilbertson said the DRC looks at all kinds of utilities, evaporators and air conditioners, signs, lighting, and all kinds of things that are practical things that people would do to their buildings.

Mr. Kaufman said it makes sense to him to put it under not the exemptions so it is still reviewed, specifically mentioning solar. If Clancy doesn't want to approve it, then it could go to the DRC.

Ms. Hallsmith said the other question is if they are going to move forward with the zoning change right now, and that is up for discussion as well. They have now recommended the floodplain regulations to the City Council, which is coming before them April 30th. If they decided to do this now, they would need to go through another public hearing process and recommend this minor change to the City Council. This came up as a relatively minor "fix it" changes. Are we going to move forward with a zoning change for this issue right now given the conversation? It seems like they haven't come up with a solution that everybody feels comfortable with, and given they are in a position where there aren't a lot of applications for solar panels maybe we just let it sit for now. She is not feeling right now we need to move forward with the zoning change to address the issue. There isn't a lot of urgency to it, and it is a lot of work.

Mr. Kaufman said he liked what Karen Vogan said about the Planning Commission being proactive. Mr. Borgendale said he is inclined to want to appeal to greater expertise on this and he would want to see Clancy work with the Design Review Committee to draft something for them to consider.

Mr. Kaufman said he would like to know what the city's attorney's definition of substantial alteration is, or non-substantial. There must be case law. Mr. Gilbertson said he was concerned about the blanket exemption.

Mr. Borgendale said he is interested in hearing from these folks about what their opinion is and what the criteria should be. What kind of solar collector installation specifically does the DRC consider to be a substantial alteration?

Results of Parking and Transit Meeting:

Ms. Hallsmith said they had circulated the surveys on the transit issues widely to the State House, stakeholders, and Energy Team. There is a lot of other information about parking specifically that the Planning Office collected last fall. The top three choices from the group at National Life and the survey were the same.

Ms. Hallsmith reviewed the survey results with the Planning Commission.

The people who chose to participate in the exercise ranked remote parking areas with a transit link, improve the city's pedestrian facilities and bicycle facilities. Those were the top three ideas people had in terms of putting together as top priorities for City Council.

Ever since the multi-modal center was proposed the idea of building another parking garage has been on the books. Yet, at the moment, we do not have either the site or the funding to build a parking garage. Developing the site and finding the funding would basically occupy the majority of Gwen's time over the next year if it were a top priority of the City Council. City Council's choice is they can say they want to build a parking garage and Gwen will have to find the money and deal with the site issues. That doesn't seem to be what people are recommending the City Council do, with the exception of some of the people in the downtown who have businesses here and think that a parking garage might deal with some of the short term parking problems. Her opinion is that it is a bit of a myth that a parking garage would solve the downtown parking problems because where they have been installed in other cities they are car magnets. You don't actually increase the capacity you have because more people come into town once you develop parking facilities. We would be better off developing a fairly substantial and robust parking plan for the city that deals with some of the outlying parking we have available, deals with how we park people in residential neighborhoods, and develop more fully the transit links around the city if we are going to be developing something that will cost the city \$10 million which is what a parking garage has been estimated to cost.

Mr. Borgendale said if they were to develop a parking garage there would need to be some sort of pricing structure something like what Burlington has. It is free for two hours, but extremely expensive for any period beyond that.

Ms. Hallsmith said whether they are developing private or public parking, the plans on the books for developing a parking garage were going to be to sell those spots to the highest bidder. The businesses downtown or lobbyists who come into town from outside the area who have plenty of money to spend on parking will be able to buy their parking spots in this new garage. The city will be able to charge a lot of money for those spots and pay for the garage that way. Is that the city's role? That is essentially dedicating public resources to what is ultimately a private good because those parking spots are reserved and owned in the city. If there is a demand for parking that costs a lot of money that would then substantially pay back a loan on a garage, that could be managed by the private sector and a private sector individual should be stepping up to the plate. She doesn't think taxpayer money should be spent developing private parking. We should be dedicating what limited public resources to really public parking, which is the kind of parking that people who drive in to go to the stores can park at for a short term that is the parking that people can take advantage of without spending a lot of money for it.

Ms. Campbell said if the people can afford to park in the garage, wouldn't that free up the same parking spaces outside the garage for others. Ms. Hallsmith said maybe, because it attracts more cars.

Ms. Campbell said thinking about the city's economic viability wouldn't we want to attract more people. What are other ways of doing that which don't compromise the city in other ways and make it less attractive and less appealing.

Mr. Kaufman said parking versus do we want more driving is the issue. He agrees with the concept that he doesn't necessarily want to bring more cars into downtown but more people through appropriate economic development, transit system, or jitney system. The surveys clearly show that a parking garage is not at the top of the community's list, and we need to listen to that.

Mr. Borgendale said is clear there is a great deal of interest in public transit and pedestrian improvements.

Ms. Campbell asked if we knew what the cost offsets would be if the money that were to go into a parking garage went into public transit how far it would take us. Ms. Hallsmith replied a long way. The cost right now we have estimated for the parking garage we were supposed to be building to go with the multi-modal center is \$10 million. You can do a lot with transit for \$10 million. Whether that money is as easily available for transit as it was for parking, even if it is available now for parking, the kind of money we were getting for the project has gone away. We were relying on Senator Jeffords' office putting earmarks in the federal budget. The earmark system has changed and Senator Jeffords is no longer there. That doesn't mean our other representatives and senators aren't as effective as Senator Jeffords was, but it was his initiative and his staff that had the key positions in the Washington places to get this done. Ms. Hallsmith said she didn't know if she could get the money to do the project, even if it were a priority for the city. Should we be investing that much of our political and financial capital in something like a parking garage?

Mr. Kaufman asked what the Planning Commission recommends to the City Council based on the stakeholder meeting held in March and the results of our survey.

Mr. Borgendale said it is easy to say we recommend we drop the idea of a parking garage.

Ms. Campbell said they should make the investment instead in alternatives, including public transit and pedestrian improvements, and remote parking and bicycles. She said she would like to hear Claire's thoughts on this because she represents businesses that will be affected by this.

Ms. Claire said the downtown merchants look at this differently than the rest of the citizens. She said they are looking at it from the limited perspective of what customers complain about, which is important. But there might be a lot of people from out of town, and we would be asking people in town who don't seem to see this as a priority to pay for something for people out of town. It would be a service for people who don't live in Montpelier. Given the costs and the lack of any place to put it seems a little too much. Clearly, the inter-city transit is a priority across the board, and if that includes satellite parking, that seems like a much better option. She imagines doing that would alleviate the need for the garage. A lot of downtown merchants aren't really engaged in all of the pros and cons. She can't honestly say that the people who put down 1's and 2's here are saying, "yes, spend \$10 million behind Aubuchon's at taxpayer cost." The last time they had a lengthy discussion about it the garage was going to be federally funded through the money from the Carr Lot project. People weren't enthusiastic about the location of that lot behind Aubuchon's.

Ms. Hallsmith said it's taxpayer money even if it comes from the federal government; it's public investment.

Ms. Benedict said she thinks it would cost Montpelier residents more than what we talked about a couple of years ago. Merchants weren't behind the location. They want a garage, but she thinks they realize that some of the things are unrealistic and she doesn't know where it is going to go or how it will be paid for.

Ms. Hallsmith said from looking at the data on the parking pressures we have that if a garage is built in Montpelier the state should build it for state uses, and they should build it on state property, because that

is where the sites are. The possible sites are the Taylor Lot across from the multi-modal transit center, which is state owned. There is a site over next to the Pavilion Building where a garage was proposed before and it got shot down because of the impact on Court Street. Even a single deck back there would bring that area up to Court Street level would make a lot of progress in terms of absorbing some of the state parking which is really what causes the problems in Montpelier when we have parking problems. Parking is hard to get this time of year when everybody is coming in to be here for the State Legislature. The rest of the year the problems just aren't as serious. There are still problems with some of the businesses downtown having adequate parking for all of their employees in an easy walking distance from the office. That is where we hear the complaints. I'm going to move out of town because I can't park anywhere near my office. They have to park out at DET. If we are going to be pushing for a parking garage we should be asking the State of Vermont to do it because they are the ones who generate the parking that is beyond their capacity to absorb it.

Ms. Benedict said her feeling is that people are saying to do something about the parking problem. If we did something about parking through a satellite parking and a bus system it might be very satisfactory to a lot of them. They are saying we need a parking garage, but they didn't spend \$10 million and locate it here.

Ms. Vogan said looking at the whole picture throwing up a garage seems like an easy and obvious way to handle it if you aren't taking into account all of the other issues that come along with it. Her personal opinion would be improving transit from outside the city, but at least a significant amount of the funding that would need to go into it ought be marketing and educating the public and getting them excited and motivated to using it.

Mr. Kaufman replied that many cities have used transit incentives when they put in new programs like this. There are two separate issues here. One is what the Planning Commission going to recommend to City Council, and the second is the state. How many times do we as a body go and talk with State Buildings and Grounds? From his outside perspective we keep getting the same response.

Ms. Hallsmith said they also know how expensive parking garages are to build and operate. They have had a blood bath in Rutland where they built a parking garage. Parking garages are made of concrete and during the winter cars track salt into those things and make them rot faster than you can imagine. They are very expensive to operate and maintain, especially in Vermont. She is sure there are people who come here from other places where they don't have salt on the roads in the winter and parking garages are relatively easy to keep up, but here in Vermont they are nightmares. The State, because they had such a bad experience with the one they built in Rutland, are just terrified of building any more. They just don't want to do it. It's not on their agenda. Really, the State is the ones that drive the problem, and it's a state function that really needs to be addressed.

Mr. Kaufman said they need to keep pushing that. We all know it is state parking that is causing some local difficulties. Here are our options. Whether it is permitted parking or zoned parking, this has to be solved and can't be continued to be put off. Tonight, what does the Planning Commission want to recommend to City Council?

Mr. Borgendale moved that the Planning Commission advise the City Council that they should abandon any plans to pursue building a parking structure in the downtown area, and to the extent there is funding available that we pursue developing and expanding the public transit system in the community. If we want to have remote parking served by public transit, that's wonderful, but he doesn't want that to be part of the motion. Ms. Benedict seconded the motion.

Ms. Hallsmith inquired about the other two priorities that people identified in terms of bicycles and pedestrians. Ms. Campbell said she would like to see added remote parking, increased pedestrian access and bike access because that represents the full input. She proposed that as an amendment to David's motion.

Mr. Borgendale said he isn't opposed to those things. My concern is we water down initiatives by trying to put everything but the kitchen sink into the initiative and going in too many directions. Mr. Borgendale said he would prefer to deal with those separately. Ms. Campbell said David's point is well taken.

Ms. Benedict said she preferred if we word the motion that rather than abandon all plans for the parking garage to rather shift our focus. She's not sure that down the road forever they should be abandoning all plans for banning a parking garage.

Mr. Kaufman asked about abandoning current plans for a garage. Mr. Borgendale said there aren't plans. Ms. Hallsmith said there are plans for a parking garage in the multi-modal transit center. The idea was to build a parking garage as they built the transit center. In fact, the parking garage was to be built first because people were worried about the Carr Lot being off limits. The Carr Lot has been sitting empty now for a couple of years because of the contamination. That parking garage a lot of people see inextricably connected to the multi-modal transit center. There is no site that has been approved and no funding in place for it.

Mr. Borgendale said he had served on the Carr Lot Committee for a period of time. His understanding is that the original charge to the citizen group that was investigating this was that not only were they supposed to replace the displaced parking but also provide some additional parking. Those two initiatives were very much tied together. He believes the City Council quite explicitly voted to disassociate any parking replacement from the multi-modal transit center initiative some time ago. In terms of the political actions that were taking place, but there is no city plan or site at this point.

Ms. Campbell asked to make a friendly amendment to the motion. she wants to underscore to the City Council that this based on public stakeholder input that the Planning Commission recommends. Ms. Benedict seconded the amendment.

Ms. Hallsmith said, with the amendment, the motion reads:

Based on public stakeholder input, the Planning Commission recommends that City Council abandon plans to build a parking garage in the downtown. Additionally, they recommend the City Council to pursue other funds to develop public transit and satellite parking.

Ms. Bragg inquired what satellite parking was.

Ms. Benedict said a parking lot and probably not a garage further outside of the downtown area where people can take a shuttle bus in. Mr. Kaufman said it is places to park where you then take public transportation into the city.

The motion passed unanimously on a 5-0 vote.

Capital City Challenge:

The City of Olympia, Washington and the City of Montpelier, Vermont have agreed to a bit of a contest that will both be working to court sustainability outcomes. It gives us the possibility for publicizing what we are doing a little bit more, obtaining sponsors of the race itself, and she has already heard from a couple of people who might be interested in being sponsors including a big appliance company. They have these new refrigerators that talk to the grid so the refrigeration in a particular area can be geared so it doesn't necessarily affect the peaking load and adjusted so that the refrigeration runs on off-peak times. This makes the electric bill for consumers less expensive because you pay more for your electricity when you are running at peak times than not. Ms. Hallsmith posed to them, when they approached her about being a sponsor that they might like to replace all of the refrigerators in Montpelier with these smart refrigerators. Bosch is a good brand name, and the total cost of that would be about \$2 million, and they spend that on a TV ad.

What about other sponsors of this race? She has been trying to reach the people at Google and other people who seem to be in line with what they are trying to do with the enVision Montpelier Project. If they could get a big bicycle company to help fund some of the proposals that are in the Mazer grant program for bicycle improvements, a recreational outfitter to help us with improvements in the parks, the sky is the limit. Couching it as a race makes it a media event and gives us an opportunity to do some more publicity and raise money. Mr. Kaufman said Schwin is trying to build their bicycle business back from Trek.

Other Business:

Ms. Hallsmith distributed the draft that the goals that the Montpelier City Council have made. These have not been adopted yet. The Council will be discussing them at their meeting on April 30th. The City Council is going to be interested in having a conversation with the Planning Commission about the goals of the enVision Montpelier Project once the draft goals are out of the different committees. That will be scheduled probably by the end of May or early June when the committees finish their work. There is some concern on Mayor Hooper's part about how thoroughly the Planning Commission has embraced the enVision Montpelier Project, partially because at some of the stakeholder meetings and at some of the committee meetings we don't have perfect attendance. She would also like feedback that if this isn't the way to go what suggestions they have, or how could they make it easier for them to participate, and just a sense from the Planning Commission about how you feel about the enVision Montpelier Project.

Ms. Benedict said there are too many meetings to attend, so she picks and chooses the meetings she can attend.

Ms. Hallsmith said she told the Mayor there are a lot of meetings and we can't expect them to attend every single meeting. What the concern is that it reflects lack of interest and lack of support for the way we are doing enVision Montpelier or the general direction it is going. It wouldn't be good to get to the end of this long process and have the Planning Commission say they aren't interested in it.

Ms. Campbell said the essential question is that each individual Planning Commissioner be in support of the enVision Montpelier process.

Mr. Borgendale said he has an extraordinary number of conflicts with its meetings. The meeting before the last stakeholder's meeting he had tickets to the ballet he had purchased six months ago so he had that conflict.

Ms. Hallsmith said she didn't have a sense there was a lack of support for the process from the Planning Commission. Sometimes there are conflicts.

Mr. Kaufman said he has the same difficulty at times. He believes in the enVision Montpelier process and thinks it is wonderful. He is behind it 90 percent because 10 percent of his time his work takes up his evening.

Ms. Hallsmith said the Infrastructure Committee could use more members. At their next meeting they are going to be looking at the growth center designation. Having Planning Commission members attend that meeting would be good. That is scheduled for April 29th at 5:30 P.M.

Ms. Campbell said she is absolutely 100 percent in support of the enVision Montpelier Project. She does attend almost every meeting, and it is a huge demand. Because there are so many enVision meetings they were hoping to cut the Planning Commission meetings back to once a month. Is that still possible? Mr. Kaufman and Ms. Hallsmith both agreed they could.

Ms. Campbell moved that the Planning Commission meet only once a month during the enVision Montpelier Project and not meet on April 28th. Mr. Borgendale seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

Mr. Borgendale said the Regional Planning Commission had its first reading of the complete revised Regional Plan that is going to be adopted this summer. It's available on the Regional Planning Commission's web site. He is interested in feedback and concerns. One of the things he is particularly interested in is there is a major section which has gotten a lot of attention on housing. There are actually some projections and an attempt to allocate future housing needs to the various communities that make up the Central Vermont Regional Planning group. There is a lot of stuff in terms of energy initiatives and infrastructure. Ms. Hallsmith said perhaps at the next meeting David could bring the draft plan and they could have it as an agenda item.

Mr. Borgendale said he is interested in him personally hearing from all of the members of the Montpelier Planning Commission any concerns. Ms. Hallsmith said May 12th would be the next Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Kaufman asked if they had changed the housing assumptions from when it was first proposed. Mr. Borgendale said there were some corrections. For example, they did correct the fact that there was more than one person per house. There was almost 7,000 housing units here according to the charts.

Ms. Hallsmith said the projections are important for the growth center determination. Mr. Borgendale said he thinks there is too much housing allocated to the smaller outlying towns and not enough to the population centers. There has been very low growth in housing units in Barre City and Montpelier over the last 5 to 10 years. To a certain extent it was project based on current growth trends, and that didn't work for those two communities so they allocated more. The plan still calls for an awful lot of housing in the countryside and the smaller communities around in Washington and Orange Counties that make up the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission. In terms of goal setting that concerns him. Going back to the energy issues, the character of Vermont and this part of the world it's a big commute state. People live in the country and drive substantial distances to go to work. What is happening with energy is going to gradually change that character and we should be planning to prepare for that.

Mr. Kaufman said they should review the draft before May 12th so they can have an informed discussion.

Election of Vice Chair:

Ms. Hallsmith said for elections the Planning Commission has been using the Consent Method. Each of the Planning Commissioners would nominate somebody to be the Vice Chair. Mark collects all of the nominations. The responsibilities of the Vice Chair are not terribly substantial. It is mostly for running the meeting when Mark can't be here. The nominations for Vice Chair were Anne Campbell, David Borgendale, and Claire Benedict. Claire and Anne removed their names. David said he would be willing to serve. Members supported David Borgendale as Vice Chair.

Ms. Benedict moved David Borgendale as Vice Chair of the Planning Commission, with Ms. Campbell seconding the motion. The vote was 4-0-1, with Mr. Borgendale abstaining.

Adjournment:

Mr. Borgendale moved adjournment, with Ms. Vogan seconding the motion. The Planning Commission adjourned at 10:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwendolyn Hallsmith, Director
Planning & Community Development