

Montpelier Planning Commission
January 12, 2009
City Council Chambers, City Hall

Subject to Review and Approval

Present: Karen Vogan, Chair; David Borgendale, Vice Chair; Claire Benedict, Matthew DeLorey, Alan Goldman, and Jesse Moorman.
Staff: Gwen Hallsmith, Director of Planning & Community Development

Call to Order:

Chair Karen Vogan called the meeting of the January 12, 2009 Planning Commission to order at 7:05 P.M.

Review if Minutes:

The minutes of the November 24, 2008 Planning Commission meeting were passed over since the meeting was an informational meeting on Transitional Towns. The minutes reflect a transcript of the public presentation.

Review of Agenda:

The Montpelier Bikes recommendations will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

Goals for the Planning Commission for 2009:

Ms. Hallsmith said as part of her budget presentation to the City Council she put together a package for members of the Planning Commission which is an organizational chart of the Planning Department, a short list of what the Planning Department achieved in 2008, a list of their responsibilities and current projects, and a draft of goals for 2009. She thought it would be useful in their first meeting of 2009 to review the goals. The first set of goals had to do with enVision Montpelier to create an action plan for a sustainable city with high participation by city residents, to continue to implement the projects that achieve the goals they have set, to begin an adoption process for an enVision plan by the stakeholder organizations, to begin revision of the Master Plan to align with the enVision Montpelier plan, and to maintain the momentum for the neighborhood associations and support their activities. She has rolled enVision Montpelier and Montpelier Capillary Neighborhoods because capillary neighborhoods ultimately is an outcome of what enVision Montpelier had recommended. We just moved forward with it earlier than expected because of the fuel oil prices going up as steeply as they did last summer.

The second one revolves around the major development projects we are doing. They are looking at resolving the outstanding issues for the development of the multi-modal transit center. That is on the property widely known as the Carr Lot. We have issued an RFP for a private partner in the district energy plan development. Address the outstanding issues of replacement parking for the Carr Lot. Complete the Pyralisk property and Turntable Park projects. There is a grant that will expire March 1st if they don't have the development plan for that property. Right now that is outside of their control, but they are still hoping to get a development plan for the Pyralisk property. It is under purchase and sale agreement currently.

There is an item to assist the Sabin's Pasture development with their master permit under Act 250. Secure funding for the implementation of the district energy system. She has been working on compiling the Montpelier river way projects which are a set of projects throughout the city that could potentially be candidates for expanded federal infrastructure appropriations if the forthcoming bail out package for municipalities comes through at the federal level.

The next category of work is the web site redesign. They are hoping to complete the web site redesign and implementation by March. They are working on making it an interactive system so that multiple people can edit it, including members of the public and department heads. They are going to be integrating the web site with the Planning Department and the Assessor's Department so you will be able to look at the tax maps on line and click on properties and access the data bases that are aligned with the different properties. You will be able to pay some of their fees and other costs to city government on line when the new web site is deployed.

Mr. Borgendale asked if the was going to be strictly credit card or also be bank transfers.

Ms. Hallsmith replied it was bank transfers and credit cards. They will be getting a discount for e-checks. You will not be getting charged for credit cards.

Grant writing and management is another big responsibility for their department. They are looking at continuing efforts to obtain funding for all of the implementation of city plans and policies. She is trying to expand the funding sources so they can continue with the sustainability grants they have begun under the Mazer Foundation funding. They are initiating new community development projects. They are working right now on a neighborhood stabilization program proposal which is the new federal funding coming to the state. There is \$19 million coming under the Housing Economic Recovery Act of 2008. The Act is aimed at the cities that are struggling with real problems because of foreclosed properties. In Stockton, California there are whole neighborhoods that are filled with empty homes from foreclosures, but thanks to our federal delegation they included a small state minimum so even though Vermont doesn't have the same level of the crisis as the rest of the country we are getting \$19 million for that. The RFP is out for that now. They are actually working on setting up a coalition of three towns, Montpelier, Barre and Berlin, to address that program.

Obviously, permits and development review is a big part of what the department does. We have been working for the last two years to streamline the permit process, and they have substantially shortened the amount of time that it takes to get a permit in our department. For example, it used to take about two weeks to get a simple zoning permit and now you can get it in a day if it is simple enough. You can walk in the office, pay your fees and walk out with the permit if it is something that doesn't require a lot of review. They have also changed the way that the DRC and the DRB meet so now it is possible to go to a DRC meeting the week before the DRB meeting that is going to take up the permit if it is a more complicated permit. This has substantially shortened the amount of time that it takes to go through the DRB process. It used to be that the DRC met the day after the DRB meeting so the minimum timing for just about any project was about a month for the review, and now it is a couple of weeks. You do need to get the permit application complete and to the Planning Department in time to post it for the DRB which has a mandated 15-day posting period. The legal mandate for the posting period is the main timeline you are struggling with and not the conflicting DRC schedules. They will continue efforts to streamline that where they can.

They are trying to raise awareness among property owners about all of the necessary permits, especially design review, because one of the obstacles they come up against is that people are new in town and they don't know they live in the Design District and they do something to their house without realizing they needed a whole bunch of permits for it and end up in enforcement, which isn't good. Obviously, providing timely technical assistance to applicants is part of that. They are going to be linking past permits to the online information so that should now be in the data base you can click on with the assessor's maps going online. The Planning Department this year will also be taking over the 911 addressing within the permit application process. Right now that is done by the Police Department, and they are not as well equipped to do it as the Planning Department is.

Obviously, ordinance review and staff development are another important part of their work and they will be continuing to review the ordinance. The major ordinance review in her opinion is appropriately timed after the Master Plan is completed so they will begin the ordinance revision once they update the Master Plan to make sure it is consistent with that. There will be another small round of floodplain changes likely that are needed before that happens.

Those are the goals she came up with for the City Council. If the Planning Commission wants to approve the goals that would be great. That way they have their direction for the year.

Mr. Borgendale moved the Planning Commission approve the goals for 2009 as proposed by Gwen, with Mr. Goldman seconding the motion. The motion was approved unanimously on a vote of 6 to 0.

Growth Center Draft Final Application:

Ms. Hallsmith presented an update on the project itself. The city received a municipal planning grant to produce the growth center application. Yet, they received it under a slightly different program. They had another round of municipal planning grants to cover growth center applications in particular, but unfortunately that round happened during the time when she was serving concurrently as the Director of Planning, the Zoning Administrator and the Community Development Specialist in her office. The first summer she was here they were short staffed and she couldn't get that application in. She submitted an application for the next round which only allowed \$15,000 instead of \$25,000. It really turns out that you do need \$25,000. These applications are a substantial piece of work, and they did their best with the money they had and the consultants they hired but didn't get it finished. They realized that in early October when the consultants all stopped work because we ran out of money. It has been up to Clancy and her since then to finish the grant application. They have put together the complete draft now.

The process from here is to go through an internal review with the consultants to make sure that none of the edits and changes she made to the application messed it up. Then, it will come back to the Planning Commission to hold public hearings on it, and then go to City Council to review and submit to the state. Once it is submitted to the state, they have 90 days to review it and come up with questions. Then, they will go up and present it to them. These are fairly controversial, and even when we consider it here in the public hearing we will have an audience of people that will be telling us to change it. Even with the requests coming in from different interest groups to change it, she opted not to. This was partially because to change the boundaries at this point without additional funding would cost money because it is a very number intensive application. We established the boundaries in part based on the amount of growth we can reasonably anticipate within those boundaries, and there are guidelines within the growth center process that we have to demonstrate the existing designated downtown cannot accept 51 percent of the growth that we anticipate in the next 25 years.

Her understanding of the period of time when we created the designed downtown what happened was that the state then really tried to constrain the boundaries of it. Conceivably, our designated downtown could be slightly bigger than it is, or even quite a big bigger than it is, but the interest wasn't really maintaining very compact development so the state put some pressure on the city to keep the boundaries quite tight. It is a fairly easy case to make that we aren't going to be able to fit the growth that we are going to see in the next 20 years within those boundaries. When you look at how we have expanded the boundaries with the idea of increasing residential development in the community there is also a balancing act to be played between the residential development that you get, or the new housing units you get, and the new jobs you are creating in areas that accept new jobs. If you say you are going to grow by 1,300 people, which is roughly what the growth center estimate says now, you have got to show there are going to be jobs for them. The traditional way of calculating where the jobs are going to go has something to do with the areas in the city that you have zoned commercial because that is where you

can build new job space. If you look at the way it was done in the growth center application, it looks at the types of jobs that are likely to be created here, the types of space that are typically needed for those jobs, and therefore the type of space needs that will have to accommodate the job growth that the population growth anticipates.

Mr. Borgendale said one of the interesting characteristics of Montpelier is that we have a lot of jobs in proportion to population. Are there requirements that we actually have a plan to create additional jobs for every new resident here? Isn't it possible that we might want to create residences who already have jobs here who would like to live here but can't?

Ms. Hallsmith said that was a really good point because she has real doubts herself about the jobs piece and the employment projections. Not only because of the point David is raising about how we have more jobs right now than we have residents, but also because the jobs of the future aren't necessarily going to be configured in the same way as the jobs of the past. We are seeing a lot more people working from their homes. We are seeing a lot more mixed use low impact creative economy kind of jobs that can go in lots of places that aren't necessarily traditional manufacturing structures or traditional commercial structures. She will bring that question back. She believes in the growth center manual you are supposed to figure out where those people are going to be working and accommodate job growth as you are projecting population growth. Montpelier might be considered exceptional in that respect.

Mr. Borgendale said his point is that Montpelier's problem is not having enough jobs for the people who live here, but not having enough housing for the people who work here.

Ms. Hallsmith said they do make that point.

Mr. Goldberg said a lot of our neighboring towns are creating sprawl housing for people who are coming here to take our jobs. Can we have jobs in Berlin? Can't some of the jobs be created next door?

Ms. Hallsmith said she isn't sure. The whole growth center application is predicated on Montpelier's boundaries. It's not like we are doing it on a regional basis. All of this is a boundary question. How do you draw the line and what districts are included within the line? That is actually also where the controversy hinges because there is some concern that has been expressed to her by VNRC and Preservation Vermont about the fact that we have included River Street and the industrial area in the growth center boundary because it is like what Montpelier has for strip development. In her opinion there is both a positive and a negative argument for including it in the boundary. On the positive side there is this job creation function, and that is our commercially zoned area. That was our consultant's caution when she said she didn't have an opinion about whether that area is in the boundary or not. If people like the Planning Commission or the City Council decide to take it out, what then? What she was focusing on was creating more housing and creating more residential areas because that is what is going to support our existing downtown. That is where we have the shortage. That is also what is going to support our infrastructure and our schools. It's also the kind of development that we are seeing sprawl out into the neighboring communities. She was fine with taking it out, but then the consultant said we would have to redo all of the numbers partially because of the job creation piece and partially because of the area, and it costs money to do that. She would prefer not to incur costs without policy board approval so she is leaving it in there for your review and the City Council's review. It may well be that when it comes before the Planning Commission or goes before the City Council the boundaries are changed. That is their job. Her job is to prepare a coherent application, and without more money she cannot prepare a coherent application with that kind of change in the numbers. That's the main problem.

Mr. Borgendale asked if Gwen had a list of objections she has received so far.

Ms. Hallsmith replied this is the only one so far, the question of the River Street area. If you look at the boundary, the boundary includes the entire medium density residential district and also includes over to Toy Town and over to the Industrial Park. Even though they might look linear on the map, there is no development that is going to happen out State Street to Toy Town, but Toy Town itself is a mixed use growth area potentially. There is an industrial zoned area out there that we share with Middlesex that is served by city infrastructure that could actually be a place where we might be able to generate more jobs and more manufacturing facilities. It is one of the very few places nearby where we would have that growth capacity. We don't risk strip development because there is no where to develop between here and the Dairy Queen. It is all river and mountain.

Mr. Goldberg said the city is providing the essential services for the Berlin Mall. We give them the sewer and water.

Ms. Hallsmith said the other piece is River Street out to the Industrial Park. The positive side is being a growth center will allow us more flexibility in redeveloping that corridor and making it more pedestrian friendly and making it work better than it does now. She agrees it's not great, but the growth center and the tax increment financing that it potentially brings with it could give us more capability of making that better.

Mr. Goldberg asked how they factor in the changing of style with people working out of their homes.

Ms. Hallsmith said she added a paragraph about it. She actually does have questions about the projection. She's not sure these same numbers will hold true over the next 20 years because of the patterns we have been seeing in new job growth not always requiring new commercial space. Developing housing, and developing quality housing, is going to be one of our biggest economic development strategies here in Montpelier. That is why our focus in the growth center has been on residential development and not on commercial or industrial development because that is the way the economy has been going. How it goes from here on in is anybody's guess.

Ms. Hallsmith said that is the only controversy she has heard so far, but that doesn't mean it's the only one we will hear.

Mr. Borgendale said he is very concerned about that. He can see the boundaries being nit picked to death.

Ms. Hallsmith said she thinks the thing that speaks in favor of the way they have drawn the boundaries is actually the growth center does not change what is currently allowable in a Montpelier zoning. There is nothing they are saying with this growth center that can be built that can't be built right now. If you are building in these areas that we have already zoned for slightly higher densities, we might be able to pay for the infrastructure with tax increment financing and give the city more of a voice and more of a role in the way that development goes in. If we are paying for the infrastructure you can bet the city will have some say in where the streets, the water and sewer go.

Mr. Goldberg said there are some designated areas to the adjacent land, how can it be used?

Ms. Hallsmith said it is allowed to be used. Under tax increment financing, however, the infrastructure can't go outside of the area that is designated as the tax increment financing district. The TIF district is still another question after they receive the growth center designation. The growth center designation

does not say that whole boundary is what we are going to include in the tax increment financing district. that's another application that has to be prepared after we have this one finished, which is also going to be an expensive one to prepare. She doesn't know where they will get the money for that. She will probably end up preparing it, and it will take awhile unless they can find some funding to get it in.

Mr. Borgendale asked if the boundaries of the designated growth center bound where TIF districts can be located.

Ms. Hallsmith said she didn't believe so. She thinks it is likely the TIF districts would be smaller, but they could extend beyond the boundaries. The line is based on topography so the line cuts a lot of parcels in half. We might want to do TIF districts in multiple cases instead of just one big one. Tax increment financing can be tricky, and Winooski got burned by it because they drew their boundaries wrong. They basically only put the downtown in the TIF district and commercial property values fell. When you develop a TIF district you are actually betting on property values increasing. You want to make sure your TIF district is diversified. She doesn't know whether what they are drawing as a growth center boundary would make complete sense as a TIF district. It may be they one to develop more than one depending on what the needs are and what the city is doing.

Mr. Borgendale asked when the Planning Commission should be expecting to warn a public hearing.

Ms. Hallsmith replied that perhaps by their first meeting in February. The draft is done now so she thinks they are ready to start reviewing it. She hasn't heard back from the consultants. She did retain enough money in the grant for them to review the additional work the Planning staff did on it.

Ms. Vogan said the next order of business would be to post the draft for a public hearing.

Mr. Borgendale said he didn't think they should be warning legislation or a document where they as a Planning Commission continue to have significant reservations about its content. It seems to be a waste of their time and the public's time.

Ms. Vogan suggested it be warned on January 23rd, and if they don't approve it on the 26th we can pull it from the agenda.

Mr. Borgendale moved that the Planning Commission authorize the warning of the growth center application for the February 9th meeting pending the Commission's approval on the 26th of January. Ms. Benedict seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a 6 to 0 vote.

Mr. Borgendale asked if the application guidelines require we just do linear projections.

Ms. Hallsmith replied no, but they do require that you do projections that are believable. You can't just draw a line on a map and call it a growth center. You have to justify it is what you need to accommodate at least 51 percent of the growth that you are going to be experiencing in the next 20 years. Montpelier's is higher than that. The line they drew would accommodate close to 70 percent of the growth we have in the next 20 years judging from our current projections. They did approve a growth center in Bennington recently that was 300 percent of the growth that the city was going to be receiving in the next 20 years, so it isn't as if the city is pushing the upper limits of their approvals.

Mr. Borgendale said he would think that the current financial crisis would have totally discredited time based linear projections. The assumption is that all underlying conditions remain the same, and they don't.

Act 250 Master Permit Process:

Ms. Hallsmith reported that another big project that is moving along is the Sabin's Pasture development project. They have now received funding from both the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and the City of Montpelier to complete a feasibility plan and a master permit application to Act 250. As she understands it from the lawyer for the Trust for Public Lands who is handling it the Planning Commission does have some responsibilities with respect to the master permit. She believes that is to review it and say something about its consistency with our Master Plan. At some point actually again in the very near future they will be coming to make a presentation to the Planning Commission about their plans. They are making a presentation to the Working Group on January 19th. The Planning Commission is welcomed to attend, and she would recommend it. This is a fairly major development that involves city funding and will obviously have a major impact on whether the city's Master Plan is being implemented.

Mr. Borgendale asked if the Planning Commission has to come up with findings that whatever the plan is will be consistent with the city's Master Plan.

Ms. Hallsmith said that would be helpful.

Mr. Borgendale inquired if they were required to do so.

Ms. Hallsmith said she had been looking through the statutes trying to find out what the requirements are and have not yet located them. She couldn't find anything about the specifics of what the Planning Commission's role is.

Mr. Borgendale said he could imagine there is some confusion about their role versus the Development Review Board in this project, too.

Ms. Hallsmith said it is the Act 250 Master Permit which is different than what the DRB will be doing. The master permits are fairly new. There are not a lot of them that have been given. Right now she has it from their lawyer that the Planning Commission has an important role in the process and she hasn't figured out what that is. It is a fairly complicated project. There are a lot of interests in both affordable housing development, which means high density, and maintaining view sheds, which means keeping it down by Barre Street and yet down by Barre Street there is a fairly substantial obstacle in that there is a railroad right-of-way right along the bottom of the property that is being turned into a bike path. It is one of these interesting developments where it's a rails to trails, but with rails to trails it also can go the other way. They can always go back to being a train, and there is quite a difference from what a train needs and what a bike needs.

Mr. Borgendale said there is an alternative rail path that goes between here and Barre.

Ms. Hallsmith replied the alternative is actually what the rail is currently running on, but it has two bridges. The rail actually starts on the Sabin's side of the river, crosses the river, and then crosses it back again between here and Barre. Her understanding from the federal train planning point of view is they had always assumed that if either of the bridges became impossible they would just keep it on one side of the river and avoid the need for two bridges. They are looking at it like a bike path and the bike path could move.

Mr. Moorman said the federal policy is they are never going to give it up. They will let us use it for all of these alternative uses and in all reality the likelihood of it ever reverting to a real active railroad is slim to none. Legally, they can if it is a federal rail bank portion.

Mr. Borgendale said it could be beneficial if it were a people transport rail.

District Energy RFP:

The city is working to develop the RFP for district energy.

Mr. Borgendale inquired what the prospects for district energy were at this point.

Ms. Hallsmith said they issued a solicitation of interest last summer which was a preliminary RFP to get a sense of who was out there who might be interested in being their partners. They were pleasantly surprised at the numbers and quality of applications they received, and she is pestered weekly by companies that want to bid on this RFP as soon as we get it out. The prospects are good. There has been an official visit from Copenhagen district energy companies back in November and gave us a fairly extensive presentation on their technology and capabilities. There is another company that visited her office in December from Denmark that has done extensive district energy projects in Europe and is expanding into Canada and the U.S. We do benefit from being so close to Canada because Canada follows Europe more than the rest of our country does and Europe has a very strong district energy program.

Mr. Borgendale asked if the state was still interested in partnering with the city.

Ms. Hallsmith replied they weren't making that a criteria. Obviously, the state would be a really good client for the district energy plant we are preparing to develop, but they aren't waiting for the state. In fact, there should be an article on the Town Meeting ballot for people to vote on that asks for a change in the authorization for the \$250,000 bond that was authorized back in early 2000 for the district energy plant. The earlier bond basically was to put a pipe between here and the state facility. Since the state has since not completed or continued their plan by funding it to expand their facility, and even if they did get the money to expand their facility they have indicated pretty clearly to us they don't have excess capacity for city tie-in. The city said we are interested in district energy and will develop our own. She has asked that the voters authorize the use of that original bond for more purposes, such as site acquisition, permitting and plant development, instead of just the pipes between the state and here because that is not really an option any longer.

Ms. Vogan said when they were discussing the budget she thought that maybe they could just use that money for the things we want to use it for without putting it before the voters.

Ms. Hallsmith said it is an old bond anyway and she is always in favor of making sure we still have public support for these things before you move forward.

Mr. Borgendale said this is the type of infrastructure project that would be an ideal target for some of the economic stimulus money.

Ms. Hallsmith reported the city is on the short list. We are a poster child for the people who are advocating district energy facilities in Washington as part of that stimulus package. We have done the feasibility study and have partners waiting in line to bid on the RFP. If the city gets a plant sited and developed, perhaps the state might well be one of our clients because their system does need upgrading. Their boilers are 66 years old.

Mr. Borgendale said the state may have decided they can no longer afford to heat its facilities and it would be cheaper to offer its employees a stipend for mittens and coats.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program Grant:

They are exploring the possibility of teaming up with Barre and Berlin to submit an application for the municipal projects part of that grant. There is \$19 million coming into the state. It's broken into at least three different programs. One is municipal projects, projects that nonprofits could submit, and Housing Finance Agency projects. They have been meeting the Central Vermont Community Land Trust and have a meeting scheduled with the other two municipalities to discuss a number of different cross cutting issues, but this would be one of the topics of that meeting. Nina Thompson and she are meeting with the state representative responsible for the program tomorrow and bringing it up with the Housing Task Force on Thursday. There are \$5 million currently allocated in the municipal program for the state, and yet she understands the program the state submitted to HUD met with some disapproval at HUD so there are some changes forecast, and she doesn't know what those changes will involve. This is a HUD program.

Mr. Borgendale asked where the \$5 million falls into the project.

Ms. Hallsmith said the \$5 million is the way the state now has structured the request for proposals that they are issuing for the \$19 million. \$5 million of the \$19 million is allocated to municipal projects.

Mr. Borgendale said the state is getting \$19 million, and of that \$19 million \$5 million is available to municipalities for grants.

Ms. Hallsmith said her understanding of some of the concerns raised by HUD related to the state not targeting areas that were in the most severe need around the state because of foreclosure issues. If Montpelier goes it alone as a single municipality we're not one of those areas, so we wouldn't be competitive. However, Montpelier, combined with Barre and Berlin as a joint project, would actually be more competitive and it would help with the building blocks for more 3-town cooperation on these kind of development issues.

Mr. Borgendale said it is true that the foreclosure rates in Berlin and Barre are much higher than in Montpelier.

Ms. Hallsmith said she wouldn't say they are much higher, but the grants go to both foreclosures and blight. You don't have to be foreclosed on to use the grant but considered a blighted property as well.

Ms. Vogan asked what would be the benefit for them to join with us.

Ms. Hallsmith replied that since it is a municipal program neither Barre or Berlin or Berlin Town have the community development staff to manage the grants, so in effect we are expanding the Planning Department's work into other communities. There is administration money in the grant that would pay us in our department.

Mr. Borgendale said he thought that was a good thing. It is moving more in the regional direction.

Ms. Hallsmith said one of the biggest recommendations coming out of the enVision Montpelier project was that we cooperate with neighboring communities to be the economic center of the region. The other thing they will be discussing at that meeting is pooling emergency services as well. As we move into economically difficult times cooperation is critical.

enVision Montpelier:

enVision Montpelier is moving along. They have changed the schedule a bit this year so in January they had one big meeting on water, which was very well attended. There were young people from nearby schools presenting their research. They had done some testing in the water and had done research on different water quality issues. They spoke to all of the different issues relating to the governance of water and to the social and human systems related to water.

Next month we don't have a big stakeholder meeting but have the committee meetings. Each of the members of the Planning Commission are the chairs of a committee.

The March meeting for stakeholders is on housing. Given the stabilization grants coming in and all of the infrastructure projects proposed along with the growth center designation that is also promising to be an interesting and well attended meeting.

Mr. Borgendale asked how that fit into Town Meeting Day.

Ms. Hallsmith said it right near the day. Maybe it will be the Town Meeting we have this year will be on housing. That would make sense. The stakeholder meeting is March 4th and Town Meeting Day is March 3rd.

Montpelier CAN:

Montpelier CAN is moving along. They had a good Montpelier CAN team leader meeting last Thursday night. There is a new program starting up that will involve the capillary neighborhoods that Paul Markowitz and Ken Jones are helping to lead. It is an energy efficiency program run by Efficiency Vermont where they are looking to train volunteers to install energy efficiency measures into peoples' homes. The energy efficiency measures will be free for the people who participate as homeowners or apartment dwellers. This includes things like light bulbs and timer thermostats and weather stripping, and some other type of efficiency measures. They are going to be working with the Montpelier CAN team leaders and people in the neighborhoods to implement it. They are hoping a lot of people will be able to take advantage of free energy saving gear this winter. They are looking to make a fairly major effort over the next couple of weeks to get people involved and get it going.

Ken Jones is coordinating the program, and Paul Markowitz is working with him.

Ms. Hallsmith read the note:

Congratulations:

You have been preliminarily selected by Efficiency Vermont to participate in the Vermont Community Energy Mobilization Pilot Project. You were selected out of 13 applications. We are very excited about moving forward with this project as we are hopeful that this community based volunteer program can be an effective approach to helping residents improve energy efficiency in their homes. Efficiency Vermont will provide overall guidance, training and energy saving products by providing a range of energy saving products free of charge for direct installation in the homes of program participants. These products include compact fluorescent light bulbs, pipe insulation, insulated tank wraps, low flow shower heads and faucet aerators and programmable thermostats. They are providing a range of educational materials and information about financial and technical resources. They are training volunteers on direct installation, doing an energy assessment and doing kitchen table discussions about practices that can improve energy in the home.

They are going to assist their local partners with program implementation. They will also consider providing a small grant to the community for a community project of their choice based on completion of about 70 percent of the visits. They will cover expenses associated with volunteer training, publicizing the program, launch dates and other related expenses as approved by Efficiency Vermont.

CAN and the Energy Team will be responsible for recruiting volunteers, organizing training, signing up program participants and organizing a specified number of home energy visits between February 1st and April 15th. Contact Ken Jones or Paul Markowitz if you are interested in participating.

She said part of the reason we were selected was because we had organized the CAN program and had already teams of volunteers in neighborhoods ready to do energy work, so we'll be able to build on that.

Adjournment:

Upon motion by Mr. Borgendale, seconded by Mr. Goldman, the Planning Commission meeting adjourned. The motion to adjourn was approved on a 6 to 0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen Hallsmith, Director
Planning & Community Development

Transcribed by: Joan Clack