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MORRISTOWN/MORRISVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 748
MORRISVILLE, VT 05661
Phone (802) 888-6373
Fax (802) 888-6378

Minutes of April 2, 2002

Members Present: Kevin Lane, Sam Guy, Bruce Tomlinson, Kelly Rogers, Bill Bourne, Bill Henchey

Members Absent: Julia Compagna,

Recorder: Mark Leonard, Zoning Administrator

Guests: Mike Miller (LCPC Planner), Scott Corse (Morrisville Water & Light Dept), Peter Bourne (Bourne's)

Sam Guy, co-chair, formally called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Mike Miller reviewed the schedule for town plan revision hearings and the plan for subsequent meetings. He suggested reviewing what is in each section of the current plan, looking at the goals, policies, and recommendations to see what should be revised. Scott Corse, Water & Light Department Manager, and Peter Bourne, Water & Light Dept Commissioner and energy business representative, were on hand to provide their inputs to the Energy section of the plan.

Scott addressed MW&L's generating capacity. At current use rates (1.5% annual usage increase), MW&L will be a net power producer until 2012. He said their three hydroelectric facilities produce 20-25% of their requirement in a good year and roughly half that in a bad year. They get 25% from Vermont Yankee, 40% from Hydro Quebec, and 10% from the McNeil wood-fired generator. He did not foresee any rate changes or other impacts from the pending sale of VT Yankee. Asked about the current status and future plans for the three hydroelectric plants, Scott said that the control centers for all three are up to date, but the turbines are old. There is not enough production capacity to warrant the purchase of newer technology turbines.

MW&L is concerned about efforts by some parties to remove the dams along the Lamoille River. The dams are licensed by the state and the licenses must be renewed in the next 10-15 years. They are working with other utility companies to ensure any watershed protection plans being developed include the existing dams. Scott suggested the town plan could explicitly support the continued existence of the dams which serve MW&L.

On the topic of renewable energy, the state is pushing rules which would require power producers to have a certain percentage of their production come from renewable sources. The proposed rules would not give credit for existing renewable sources such as MW&L's hydro plants. MW&L, along with other Vermont utilities, is working through Vermont Public Power Supply Agency (VPSSA) on a project to develop wind-generated power. Scott said that Morristown's topography and wind patterns are not especially favorable for this type of system. He said there is some potential for biomass (i.e., wood-burning) systems, but production costs are still much higher than traditional generating systems. There is low potential for generating power using methane gas from cow manure. In the area of private renewable energy production, MW&L is obliged under state statutes to buy any excess power produced by private individuals, up to a maximum of 100 Kw, but to date there has been very limited private renewable production in this area. MW&L will continue to advocate for private renewable production and tax incentives for those who choose to use such systems.

Asked about capital projects which the town plan might help make eligible for grants, Scott said that as a revenue-earning agency, they are limited in their ability to successfully apply for grants. They do not currently

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receive any federal or state grant funds, but can indirectly benefit from grants made to VPPSA. He suggested that town plan support on state and regional issues, such as maintaining the dams, would be most useful.

Scott stated that MW&L's conservation programs have been largely supplanted by the state when they created a statewide energy efficiency utility. Under this program, local utilities collect a use fee which funds state energy efficiency programs. This method is a net loss to the local utilities, who had previously used all similar user fees locally. He did say that MW&L's pricing structure is designed to encourage energy conservation by offering lower rates for off-peak use. Most commercial efficiencies have already been incorporated and new residential construction is producing more efficient homes. Scott suggested shielding municipal street lights could allow use of more efficient bulbs, reducing consumption.

Peter Bourne said that generally there do not appear to be any areas where municipal projects or policies would improve the distribution or use of home heating oil. He noted that the 2000 Census data, which is due in a few months, would provide more detail on local home heating usage. His comments conclude the review of the Energy section of the town plan.

Minutes of the last meeting (Mar 19, 2002) were reviewed. On a motion by Kelly, seconded by Bruce, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Sam informed the commission of the Select Board's recent motion to support use of the Lamoille Valley Railroad line for trails. He suggested a letter from the Planning Commission echoing this support might help convince state legislators to pass legislation to that effect. On a motion by Bill Bourne, seconded by Kelly, the Commission voted unanimously to draft a letter supporting use of the railroad line for trails.

The next meeting will be on April 16, 2002 at the Water & Light Department building on Elmore St. It will address the Transportation section of the town plan. A warned public hearing on proposed amendments to the Morrisville/Morristown Zoning & Subdivision Bylaws will follow the town plan review.

Bill Henchy moved and Bill Bourne seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting; motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark Leonard, recorder

Cc: Town of Morristown Select Board
Morristown/Morrisville Development Review Board
Town Clerk