

**Montpelier Planning Commission**  
**March 8, 2010**  
**City Council Chambers, City Hall**

*Subject to Review and Approval*

**Present:** Jesse Moorman, Chair; David Borgendale, Vice Chair; Missa Aloisi, John Bloch and Bethany Pombar.  
Staff: Gwen Hallsmith, Director, Planning and Community Development.

**Call to Order:**

Jesse Moorman, Chair, called the March 8, 2010 meeting of the Montpelier Planning Commission to order at 7:00 P.M.

**Review of Minutes:**

Upon motion by Bethany Pombar and David Borgendale, the minutes of February 8, 2010 were approved unanimously.

**enVision Plan Drafting – Master Plan:**

The Planning Commission will finish the discussion of the Natural Environment Section of the Master Plan and begin working on the Social Systems Section. Members went over the revisions for Goals B through E. Staff have made the revisions and highlighted them.

**Goal B: Natural Communities & Biodiversity.** The Planning Commission made no changes to this section.

**Goal C: Open Space & Recreation.** Bethany Pombar inquired if the Planning Commission were going to look at some of the percentages. 55 percent seems to be a bit low.

Missa Aloisi said on page 11 in Target 1 they had changed it to 75 percent. They also changed 85 to 95 percent. They also said this needs to be compatible with the transportation section. Strategy 1b used to say redesign the bike path to increase its accessibility and use and now it says to extend the river-way bike path so that it is tied in larger, regional transportation path plans. They should assess what needs to be redesigned first. She would also keep increase the accessibility in that strategy as well.

Mr. Moorman asked what her thoughts were about assessing the redesign.

Ms. Aloisi said they should assess where it needs to be extended. Assess areas that are not accessible or difficult to travel on. Assess and extend.

Mr. Borgendale asked why this was restricted to the river-way bike path. Why are they not talking about the possibility of others?

Mr. Moorman said the original strategy said the bike path.

Ms. Aloisi said this is tied into larger regional transportation plans.

Ms. Pombar asked if they could say to assess and extend Montpelier bike paths so they are inclusive of all of them.

Mr. Borgendale said in Target 3 the target language is restricted to downtown, but the strategies aren't. Ms. Hallsmith said they could just cross out "downtown."

**Goal D: Waste Management.** Mr. Moorman said the highlighting of Green Purchasing Policy is to make sure it is defined. When the document is complete there will be a glossary or index.

Mr. Borgendale said in looking at stuff like reusable shopping bags, one of the things that struck him in Europe is that you have to buy the bags. If you don't bring your own bag along you have to buy them. He doesn't know they could pass a city ordinance that says stores have to charge people for bags.

Ms. Hallsmith said they could in Massachusetts, but she doesn't think they could in Vermont. Different states have different levels of authorities on different topics that cities can take up. Vermont is actually fairly weak on home rule if you compare them to other states. A big city like San Francisco or London they have more power than we do.

Mr. Borgendale said basically in this state anything not expressly granted to the municipality is reserved to the state.

Ms. Hallsmith said in Massachusetts it works the other way. Anything that isn't specifically prohibited by the state for municipalities to do they can do.

Mr. Borgendale said if they did something like that it would be an incentive to people. You aren't just appealing peoples' better nature. You are hitting the pocketbook.

Mr. Moorman asked if they were suggesting to put in another sub strategy here that is a little more forceful about a ban on reusable bags.

Ms. Hallsmith said they could expand Strategy 1b.3 to say provide individual action steps and other incentives. If the leadership chooses to pursue that type of policy, then this would be the policy framework to back it up. She thinks it is very unlikely that the City Council would ban non-reusable plastic bags at any point in the near future.

Mr. Borgendale said he wasn't saying to ban them. If you had to pay for them each time you took them, and if you went to Shaw's and didn't get four or five times as many bags you would probably need...

Ms. Hallsmith replied it would be like the bottle law. You would put a deposit on it essentially.

Mr. Borgendale said even if you allowed them to be used if you charged for them people will make sure they use less.

Mr. Bloch said Shaw's is half way there at the local market. Right at the checkout stand for \$1 or 99 cents you can buy a bag.

Mr. Moorman said they also discount you a couple cents if you bring your own bag. It should be reversed where they shouldn't provide you pennies for bringing your own bag but charge you pennies for every bag you have to use.

Mr. Bloch said it isn't just the food vendors; every place has these big plastic bags.

### **Goal E: Air & Climate.**

Mr. Bloch asked if the city was doing any air testing.

Ms. Hallsmith said the Conservation Commission has been working with the schools and some other organizations to start a school based air quality monitoring program where we will get some equipment that had been purchased for the city awhile back and parked at some place not being used. They are working within the constraints of the energy grant and some other things to help fund it over time. He has applied for another grant. She hopes the program with the schools will work out and they will mobilize that equipment.

### **Social & Human Development:**

The Planning Commission broke into work groups to review the goals of Social & Human Development to make changes. Changes made during this session will be redrafted by the Planning Department staff for final review by the full Planning Commission at their next meeting.

**Adjournment:**

The Planning Commission adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen Hallsmith  
Director of Planning & Community Development