

**SCENERY PRESERVATION COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
VERMONT STATE HOUSE  
FIRST FLOOR, ROOM #10  
115 STATE STREET  
MONTPELIER, VERMONT  
July 23, 2007**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jill Michaels (Chairwoman)  
Lew Sorenson  
Matt Langham  
Tordis Isselhardt

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Sen. Hull Maynard  
Rep. Deb Evans  
Danielle Fitzko  
Diane Gayer

**STAFF:** Tom Kennedy  
Peter Gregory (absent)  
John LaBarge (absent)

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mel Adams, VTrans  
Marianne Riordan, Recording Secretary

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**1. CALL TO ORDER and APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Jill Michaels called the meeting to order at 1:20 p.m.

Approval of May 7, 2007 Minutes

**MOTION by Lew Sorenson, SECOND by Tordis Isselhardt, to approve the minutes of 5/7/07 with the following corrections/clarifications:**

**Page 1, Item #2, Byway Designation, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, 1<sup>st</sup> sentence – change to read: “The Rutland Regional Planning Commission could not be present due to a miscommunication.”**

**Page 2, top of page, last bulleted item – change “Bennington City” to “Town of Bennington”.**

**VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.**

**2. DISCUSSION/VOTE ON BYWAY DESIGNATION REQUEST: STONE VALLEY CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**MOTION by Lew Sorenson, SECOND by Tordis Isselhardt, to approve the Stone Valley Corridor Management Plan and recommend designation of the Stone Valley Scenic Byway to the State Transportation Board subject to inclusion of any updated material as a result of the hearing in Manchester (i.e. items identified in the minutes from the hearing).**

**DISCUSSION:** There was discussion of ensuring all necessary documentation is received. Reference was made to the number of suggestions noted on Pages 1 and 2 of the 5/7/07 Scenery Preservation Council minutes relative to the Stone Valley Corridor Management Plan, and allowing minor edits to the plan to reflect the suggestions prior to review of the plan by the Transportation Board. Matt Langham pointed out the corridor management plan stands as a plan. The suggestions in the minutes are good and they do strengthen the plan, but the plan is a living document which can be amended at any point. Mr. Langham cautioned against micro-managing. Tom Kennedy suggested prioritizing the suggestions and allowing the applicant the opportunity to address them. Following further discussion there was agreement the wording in the motion to include allowance to accommodate any fine tuning the byway advocates would like to do to be responsive to the suggestions in the 5/7/07 SPC minutes is acceptable.

**VOTING:** unanimous; motion carried.

Lew Sorenson mentioned formally acknowledging the good work done by the byway advocates in evolving the proposal to its current point. Regional planning commissions and citizen byway advocates should be commended. Jill Michaels added the groups should be commended not only for the quality of the work, but for the commitment to the process. Commendations will be included in the acceptance letter sent by staff.

### **3. DISCUSSION OF CHANGE IN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Mel Adams reported the Legislature made decisions in the last session on the number of state personnel positions to be maintained, including the number of exempt positions. There are 20 exempt positions targeted, mainly in Public Affairs and support positions. The Secretary of Transportation was instructed to reduce the number of exempt staff by one. The Byway Coordinator position held by John LaBarge is the exempt position that was changed to a classified position. It is not practical to have support staff for the scenic byways program performing the same functions as Mr. LaBarge so transition of tasks done by Tom Kennedy and Peter Gregory will be outlined and transferred to John LaBarge. Mr. LaBarge wants to know the expectations of the SPC in terms of staff support. Mr. LaBarge will be developing the meeting agenda and attending SPC meetings. Mr. Adams noted VTrans is investigating more flexibility in funding for the SPC (i.e. not just transportation funding) so staff support from other divisions can be used. Lew Sorenson asked if the staffing provided by VTrans to the SPC will be affected by the changes. Mr. Adams stated VTrans will be able to provide more staffing because John LaBarge will be more involved with the byways. There will now be a single point of contact. VTrans will have more oversight. Mr. Sorenson pointed out the SPC is a community based, lay person, volunteer effort. The desire is to be accommodating as John LaBarge acclimates to the job. Mr. Adams assured Mr. LaBarge will take guidance provided by the SPC. John LaBarge's role will be to build other agency involvement and fiscal support for the SPC and the byways program. Tordis Isselhardt expressed concern about one person being designated to do the job that three people were doing. Mel Adams assured there will be support staff to assist and some work previously handled by Mr. LaBarge (i.e. byway grants) will be handled by local transportation facilities. Mr. Adams

pointed out Mr. LaBarge has been working in the grant program and has traveled the state as a result. Mr. LaBarge is a very determined and focused worker, but assurance must be made that the focus is the same as the applicant to avoid over-directing.

There was discussion of the SPC brochure and input from Tourism and Marketing. The target audience for the brochure is a consideration in drafting the contents of the brochure (e.g. describing the scenic byways program versus indicating the location of byways with a focus on tourism and marketing).

There was mention of the work plan. Jill Michaels, Tom Kennedy, Peter Gregory, and John LaBarge will meet to discuss the tasks to be contained in the work plan. Mel Adams urged expansive thinking and adding items and goals to the work plan that may have been excluded in the past due to funding considerations. Funding resources will be investigated. Mr. Adams also suggested bringing in people from various divisions and explaining the byways program so there is an understanding of the program.

#### **4. OTHER BUSINESS**

##### Cultural Heritage Tourism Coordinator

Tordis Isselhardt announced Kathryn Brooks was appointed as the Cultural Heritage Tourism Coordinator in the Tourism & Marketing Division confirming the division's recognition of the importance of cultural heritage tourism in the State of Vermont.

##### SPC Brochure

Tourism & Marketing will try to incorporate the SPC brochure in their marketing materials. Tom Kennedy noted other areas of importance in addition to designating scenic byways include sustaining the designated byways. Thought should also be given to the role of the SPC outside of transportation, such as dealing with windmills, cell towers, and such. Communication between VTrans and the SPC is essential. Also, employing today's technology more to support the byways is needed.

#### **5. NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS**

Next Meeting: September 10, 2007.

##### Agenda Items:

- Review/Approval of Minutes from Public Hearing in Manchester
- Work Plan
- Discussion of Cultural Heritage Tourism Coordinator Position with Bruce Hyde
- Report on National Byways Conference

#### **6. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by Tordis Isselhardt, SECOND by Matt Langham, to adjourn the meeting. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

“TO DO” List from 7/23/07 SPC Meeting:

1. Tom Kennedy will poll members on the next meeting date (9/10/07) to determine if the date is acceptable.
2. Prior to the next regular meeting, Tom Kennedy, Peter Gregory, Jill Michaels, and John LaBarge will meet to work on the work plan which will be discussed at the next SPC meeting.
3. Lew Sorenson mentioned formally acknowledging the good work done by the Stone Valley byway advocates in evolving the proposal to its current point. Regional planning commissions and citizen byway advocates should be commended. Jill Michaels added the groups should be commended not only for the quality of the work, but for the commitment to the process. Commendations will be included in the acceptance letter sent by staff.