

**SCENERY PRESERVATION COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
NATIONAL LIFE RECORDS BUILDING
MEETING ROOM
MONTPELIER, VERMONT
January 22, 2008**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jill Michaels (Chairwoman)
Lew Sorenson
Matt Langham
Tordis Isselhardt
Danielle Fitzko
Diane Gayer

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sen. Hull Maynard
Rep. Deb Evans

STAFF: John LaBarge

OTHERS PRESENT: Bruce Hyde, Tourism & Marketing
Jane Lendway, VTrans
Craig Digiammarino, VTrans
Karen Glitman, UVM Transportation Center
Marianne Riordan, Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER and APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jill Michaels called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

Approval of October 29, 2007 Minutes

MOTION by Tordis Isselhardt, SECOND by Lew Sorenson, to table action on the 10/29/07 minutes until the next SPC meeting. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

2. MAPPING OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS – Jane Lendway

Jane Lendway reported there is a GIS project underway in VTrans to create a digital database of historic sites and structures in Vermont from data collected on the historic site and structure survey. Data layers for eight historic towns and a barn census is also being done. A structure must be at least 50 years old and meet specific criteria in order to be considered 'historic'. Structures include houses, dams, powerhouses, mills, bridges, mill ponds, ruins, or archeological sites with architectural or historic significance. With the database, points will be located on a map and behind each point will be an information file about the site. All information stored in the database can be viewed and searched. Ms. Lendway explained the digital downtown project for designated downtowns which are on the list of Preserve America communities. There are eight towns in Vermont participating as pilots, including Bennington, Brandon, Burlington, Poultney, St. Albans, St. Johnsbury, White River Junction, and Winooski. Information compiled includes a building footprint of the downtown and GIS points. The barn census is part of the Preserve America program as well. There is a survey that barn owners can volunteer to complete. The information will be centralized in a database. The barn project is estimated to take two years to complete. VTrans hopes to have all records digitalized

within the next three years. Contact Nancy Boone or www.historicvermont.org for more information. The purpose of the programs is to further enhance the “sense of place” that visitors experience in Vermont, stated Ms. Lendway.

There was discussion of how to access the database. Ms. Lendway stated the user will be able to link to their focus of interest. Bruce Hyde stated it is hoped visitors will be able to search 1820 period houses by towns, for example, or covered bridges, falls, or barns in Vermont so an itinerary can be created for a visit to the area. Tordis Isselhardt spoke in support of the long needed database to provide accessibility, data, and links to information and places in the state. There was mention of packaging the database and additional information not covered in the survey, but gleaned from townspeople who know the history of their community (i.e. Franco-American theme). Ms. Lendway stated thematic information will be recorded, but it is not known how this will be worked into the database at this time.

Danielle Fitzko asked if communities with byways can apply for a grant and do a byways survey. John LaBarge stated funding would have to be found to do a survey. If funding comes from the byways program, then the focus must be on byways. There was further discussion of funding and possibly having the SPC seek grant money.

3. ROADSIDE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN – Craig Digiammarino

Craig Digiammarino, Environmental Coordinator in the VTrans Operations Division, explained best management practices (BMP) are being developed to maintain safety and efficiency and protect structures (wetlands and such). Vegetation management includes maintaining buffers, reducing mowing, clearing in 50’ buffer strips, and wetlands avoidance. The objective is to visually complement what is there now, but there will be less mowing. Mowing to the right-of-way fence will not occur. A 30’ wide strip will be mowed each year and every third year a strip 100’ wide will be mowed. Most of the mowing issues involve interstate highways. Mr. Digiammarino suggested information on the state’s vegetation management plan could be included in the corridor management plans for byways in some manner. The SPC spoke in support of less mowing, and suggested local communities communicate their own suggestions on mowing in their area. The local conservation commission or tree warden should provide input. There was mention of roadside tree/brush management (the SPC disagreed with roadside cutting of tree branches and brush). There was brief discussion of the wild flower planting program along interstate highways. It was noted FHWA rules must be followed first and then requests from local communities can be addressed.

4. MEETING WITH TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Following discussion the SPC determined a meeting with the Transportation Board is not necessary at this time.

5. LAKE CHAMPLAIN BYWAY (RE)DESIGNATION

There was discussion of the request to re-designate the Lake Champlain byway as a whole rather than piecemeal. There are other towns along the byway interested in joining

and the issue is whether these towns must go through the entire process for designation or if their selectboards can make the decision for the towns. Mr. LaBarge expressed concern about cutting out the public input portion of the designation process. The SPC was in agreement the existing process should be maintained for every town seeking a byway designation. It may be possible to combine re-designation and the addition of a new segment (town) along a byway, but the bylaws for byways must be reviewed to determine if the process can be streamlined in any manner. Following further discussion the SPC agreed re-designating a byway as a whole is acceptable provided letters from every town stating their support of the re-designation are received. Communities need to know what the SPC expects for re-designation to occur, and that the individual corridor management plans will be reviewed to ensure what was outlined to be done has been done or some progress toward that end has been made. Bruce Hyde asked what happens if a town makes changes to the byway that are in conflict with the corridor management plan. It was noted this would not be known to the SPC unless there was a visit to the area or someone informed the SPC of the situation.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

7. ADJOURNMENT and PLANNING SESSION

The SPC meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m. A planning session facilitated by Karen Glitman, UVM Transportation Center, was held from Noon until 3 p.m.

RScty: M.E.Riordan

“TO DO” List from 1/22/08 SPC Meeting:

1. Approval of the 10/29/07 minutes postponed until the next SPC meeting.
2. John LaBarge will inform towns wanting to join the Lake Champlain Byway that the SPC reviewed the process and felt the process for designation of a byway should apply to each town. For re-designation it is acceptable to re-designate the byway as a whole. In fact, this is encouraged. Letters of support for the re-designation from each town must be submitted to the SPC.