BCRC

Bennington County Regional Commission

210 SOUTH STREET ● SUITE 6 ● BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201 ● (802) 442-0713

VERMONT
LAND USE REVIEW BOARD
Application #: RPC02-0001
Exhibit #: 025
Date Received: 09-23-2026

April 27, 2026

Ms. Cynthia Browing, Acting Administrator
Town of Arlington
3828 Vermont Route 7A
Arlington, VT 05250
cynthia.browning@arlingtonvermont.org

Re: Municipal Plan – Confirmation of Planning Process

Dear Cynthia:

The Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) has been reviewing and updating its files to ensure that all municipalities with a confirmed planning process have received a letter documenting that fact. *This letter is a recognition of prior actions and* ***does not change the current expiration date of your municipal plan.***

The Town of Arlington approved the *Arlington Town Plan* on June 29, 2020, and submitted it to the BCRC for review and confirmation of the planning process.

The BCRC reviewed the municipal plan in the context of 24 V.S.A. Section 4350 and by a vote of commissioners on July 16, 2020, confirmed that the Town of Arlington has a duly adopted plan and a confirmed planning process, per 24 V.S.A. 4302 and 4382. The BCRC found that the plan:

(A) is consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. Section 4302;
(B) is compatible with the regional plan
(C) is compatible with the approved plans of other municipalities in the region; and
(D) contains all the elements included in subdivisions 24 V.S.A. Section 4382(a)(1)-(12).

Therefore, the *Arlington Town Plan* remains in effect through its expiration date of June 29, 2028 and will be documented as approved by the BCRC. Arlington's planning process is confirmed pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Section 4350. The minutes from the July 16, 2020 BCRC meeting are attached for reference.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this determination.

Sincerely,

William Colvin
Director

Bennington County Regional Commission

MINUTES

Thursday – July 16, 2020
5:30 PM
Zoom Meeting

Present: Janet Hurley, Charlie Rockwell, Nick Zaiac, Megan Herrington, Cynthia Browning, John LaVecchia, Sr., John LaVecchia, Jr., Bruce Lierman, Nancy Faesy, Tyler Yandow

BCRC Staff: Jim Sullivan, Catherine Bryars, Bill Colvin

I. **Welcome and Introductions**

II. **Public Hearing: Consideration of Approval of Town Plans for Arlington, Dorset, Manchester, and Shaftsbury**

The hearing was closed after introductory comments and no discussion, and all ballots counted with 16 municipal representatives voting in favor of approval (13 required); 19 total votes in favor. The plans are approved and the municipal planning processes confirmed.

III. **Public Hearing: Consideration of Approval of Determinations of Energy Compliance for the Arlington, Dorset, and Manchester Town Plans**

The hearing was closed after introductory comments and no discussion, and all ballots counted with 16 municipal representatives voting in favor of approval (13 required); 19 total votes in favor. The plans are approved and the Chair will sign Determinations of Energy Compliance that will be provided to the Public Utility Commission.

IV. **Review and Discussion of Proposed Amendments to the BCRC Bylaws**

Jim Sullivan presented an overview of the proposed changes:

Section 2:

- Change the number of voting commissioners per town from two to one (villages and Glastenbury stay the same, with one). Each town will still have two representatives, but will have to designate a commissioner and a "co-commissioner."

- To be consistent with statute, interest group representatives (other than the economic development representatives) are made non-voting members.
- If a municipality fails to appoint a commissioner, the chair of the municipal planning commission is considered to be the commissioner.

Section 3:

- One vote per municipality (commissioner, or, if unable to vote, the co-commissioner votes).
- Any votes can be done via postal and/or electronic (email) ballot prior to a meeting.

Discussion: Question asked about current and projected total number of commissioners and representation (result of bylaw changes would be to have 17 voting municipal commissioners and 30 total municipal commissioners, five economic development commissioners, and interest group representation from energy, transportation, housing, and public health – and any other interest approved by the commission).

Question about role of co-commissioner (essentially the same as now, bringing local input to the full commission, returning information to their town or village – just not voting on the few items that the full commission is required to vote on – largely regional plan adoption and municipal plan approvals).

Some discussion ensued as to the history of the commission and changing municipal representation over time, current role of the commission, the executive committee, executive director, and staff. Noted the need to be able to ensure that key issues are voted on by a majority of the voting commissioners. With continuing municipal vacancies and lack of participation by many commissioners, quorums have been increasingly difficult to obtain. Thus, the proposed change to consolidate voting representation as well as to specifically authorize mail-in/email-in ballots.

The Bylaw amendments will be voted on in September.

V. **Other Business**

September meeting – also likely to be held via Zoom – will include a presentation on the State's new "Zoning for Great Neighborhoods" report and a related project that the BCRC has been working on involving municipal land use regulations related to housing in our region.

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Sullivan
Executive Director

BCRC

Bennington County Regional Commission

210 SOUTH STREET ● SUITE 6 ● BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201 ● (802) 442-0713

January 16, 2026

Daniel Monks, Town Manager
205 South Street
P.O. Box 469
Bennington, VT 05201
dmonks@benningtonvt.org

Re: Town Plan – Confirmation of Planning Process

Dear Mr. Monks:

On November 10, 2025, following two years of work, the Town of Bennington adopted the *Bennington Town Plan*. Incorporated in the plan is an enhanced energy plan.

The Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) has reviewed the town plan in the context of 24 V.S.A. Section 4350 and by a vote of commissioners on January 15, 2026 has affirmed Bennington's plan and planning process. The BCRC found that the plan, as adopted on November 10, 2025:

(A) is consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. Section 4302;
(B) is compatible with the regional plan
(C) is compatible with the approved plans of other municipalities in the region; and
(D) contains all the elements included in subdivisions 24 V.S.A. Section 4382(a)(1)-(12).

Therefore, the Bennington Town Plan, which remains in effect through its expiration date of November 10, 2033, will be documented as approved by the BCRC and Bennington's planning process confirmed pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Section 4350.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this determination.

Sincerely,

William Colvin
Director

BCRC

Bennington County Regional Commission

210 SOUTH STREET ● SUITE 6 ● BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201 ● (802) 442-0713

April 27, 2026

Mr. Rob Gaiotti, Town Manager
Town of Dorset
200 Raptor Lane
Dorset, VT 05251
townmanager@gmail.com

Re: Municipal Plan – Confirmation of Planning Process

Dear Rob:

The Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) has been reviewing and updating its files to ensure that all municipalities with a confirmed planning process have received a letter documenting that fact. *This letter is a recognition of prior actions and* ***does not change the current expiration date of your municipal plan.***

The Town of Dorset approved the *Dorset Town Plan* on January 21, 2020, and submitted it to the BCRC for review and confirmation of the planning process. Subsequently, the current plan was amended in August 2023; the approved amendments were minor, and the plan retains its expiration date of January 21, 2028.

The BCRC reviewed the municipal plan in the context of 24 V.S.A. Section 4350 and by a vote of commissioners on July 16, 2020, confirmed that Dorset has a duly adopted plan and a confirmed planning process, per 24 V.S.A. 4302 and 4382. The BCRC found that the plan:

(A) is consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. Section 4302;
(B) is compatible with the regional plan
(C) is compatible with the approved plans of other municipalities in the region; and
(D) contains all the elements included in subdivisions 24 V.S.A. Section 4382(a)(1)-(12).

Therefore, the *Dorset Town Plan* remains in effect through its expiration date of January 21, 2028, and will be documented as approved by the BCRC. Dorset's planning process is confirmed pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Section 4350. The minutes from the July 16, 2020, BCRC meeting are attached for reference.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this determination.

Sincerely,

William Colvin
Director

Bennington County Regional Commission

MINUTES

Thursday – July 16, 2020
5:30 PM
Zoom Meeting

Present: Janet Hurley, Charlie Rockwell, Nick Zaiac, Megan Herrington, Cynthia Browning, John LaVecchia, Sr., John LaVecchia, Jr., Bruce Lierman, Nancy Faesy, Tyler Yandow

BCRC Staff: Jim Sullivan, Catherine Bryars, Bill Colvin

I. **Welcome and Introductions**

II. **Public Hearing: Consideration of Approval of Town Plans for Arlington, Dorset, Manchester, and Shaftsbury**

The hearing was closed after introductory comments and no discussion, and all ballots counted with 16 municipal representatives voting in favor of approval (13 required); 19 total votes in favor. The plans are approved and the municipal planning processes confirmed.

III. **Public Hearing: Consideration of Approval of Determinations of Energy Compliance for the Arlington, Dorset, and Manchester Town Plans**

The hearing was closed after introductory comments and no discussion, and all ballots counted with 16 municipal representatives voting in favor of approval (13 required); 19 total votes in favor. The plans are approved and the Chair will sign Determinations of Energy Compliance that will be provided to the Public Utility Commission.

IV. **Review and Discussion of Proposed Amendments to the BCRC Bylaws**

Jim Sullivan presented an overview of the proposed changes:

Section 2:

- Change the number of voting commissioners per town from two to one (villages and Glastenbury stay the same, with one). Each town will still have two representatives, but will have to designate a commissioner and a "co-commissioner."

- To be consistent with statute, interest group representatives (other than the economic development representatives) are made non-voting members.
- If a municipality fails to appoint a commissioner, the chair of the municipal planning commission is considered to be the commissioner.

Section 3:

- One vote per municipality (commissioner, or, if unable to vote, the co-commissioner votes).
- Any votes can be done via postal and/or electronic (email) ballot prior to a meeting.

Discussion: Question asked about current and projected total number of commissioners and representation (result of bylaw changes would be to have 17 voting municipal commissioners and 30 total municipal commissioners, five economic development commissioners, and interest group representation from energy, transportation, housing, and public health – and any other interest approved by the commission).

Question about role of co-commissioner (essentially the same as now, bringing local input to the full commission, returning information to their town or village – just not voting on the few items that the full commission is required to vote on – largely regional plan adoption and municipal plan approvals).

Some discussion ensued as to the history of the commission and changing municipal representation over time, current role of the commission, the executive committee, executive director, and staff. Noted the need to be able to ensure that key issues are voted on by a majority of the voting commissioners. With continuing municipal vacancies and lack of participation by many commissioners, quorums have been increasingly difficult to obtain. Thus, the proposed change to consolidate voting representation as well as to specifically authorize mail-in/email-in ballots.

The Bylaw amendments will be voted on in September.

V. **Other Business**

September meeting – also likely to be held via Zoom – will include a presentation on the State's new "Zoning for Great Neighborhoods" report and a related project that the BCRC has been working on involving municipal land use regulations related to housing in our region.

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Sullivan
Executive Director

BCRC

Bennington County Regional Commission

210 SOUTH STREET ● SUITE 6 ● BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201 ● (802) 442-0713

July 17, 2025

Mr. Scott Murphy, Town Manager
40 Jeff Williams Way
Manchester Center, VT 05255
s.murphy@manchester-vt.gov

Re: Town Plan – Confirmation of Planning Process

Dear Mr. Murphy:

The Town of Manchester approved the *Manchester Town Plan* on May 6, 2025 and submitted it to the Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) for review and confirmation of the planning process on May 17, 2025.

The Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) has reviewed the town plan in the context of 24 V.S.A. Section 4350 and by a vote of commissioners on July 17, 2025 has affirmed Manchester's plan and planning process. The BCRC found that the plan:

(A) is consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. Section 4302;
(B) is compatible with the regional plan
(C) is compatible with the approved plans of other municipalities in the region; and
(D) contains all the elements included in subdivisions 24 V.S.A. Section 4382(a)(1)-(12).

Therefore, the Manchester Town Plan remains in effect through its expiration date of May 6, 2033 and will be documented as approved by the BCRC. Manchester's planning process is confirmed pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Section 4350.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this determination.

Sincerely,

William Colvin
Director

BCRC

Bennington County Regional Commission

210 SOUTH STREET ● SUITE 6 ● BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201 ● (802) 442-0713

April 27, 2026

Mr. Curan VanDerWielen, Village Manager
Village of Manchester
45 Union Street, Box 482
Manchester, VT 05254

Re: Municipal Plan – Confirmation of Planning Process

Dear Curan:

The Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) has been reviewing and updating its files to ensure that all municipalities with a confirmed planning process have received a letter documenting that fact. *This letter is a recognition of prior actions and* ***does not change the current expiration date of your municipal plan.***

The Village of Manchester approved the *Village of Manchester, VT Plan of Development* on September 12, 2022, and submitted it to the BCRC for review and confirmation of the planning process.

The BCRC reviewed the municipal plan in the context of 24 V.S.A. Section 4350 and by a vote of commissioners on September 15, 2022, confirmed that the Village of Manchester has a duly adopted plan and a confirmed planning process, per 24 V.S.A. 4302 and 4382. The BCRC found that the plan:

(A) is consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. Section 4302;
(B) is compatible with the regional plan
(C) is compatible with the approved plans of other municipalities in the region; and
(D) contains all the elements included in subdivisions 24 V.S.A. Section 4382(a)(1)-(12).

Therefore, the *Village of Manchester, VT Plan of Development* remains in effect through its expiration date of September 12, 2030, and will be documented as approved by the BCRC. The Village of Manchester's planning process is confirmed pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Section 4350. The minutes from the September 15, 2022, BCRC meeting are attached for reference.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this determination.

Sincerely,

William Colvin
Director

Bennington County Regional Commission

MINUTES

Thursday - September 15, 2022
4:30 PM
Merck Forest & Farmland Center – Rupert

Present: Nancy Faesy, Jim Hand, Ellen Maloney, Tom Wilson, Jane Davies (Rupert Village Trust), Jean Ceglowski, Bruce Lierman, Megan Herrington, Robin Chestnut-Tangerman, Charlie Rockwell, John LaVecchia Jr., Rob Terry (Merck Forest), Richard Zoppel, Sheila Kearns

Staff: Jim Henderson, Scott Grimm-Lyon, Callie Fishburn, Jonathan Cooper, Bill Colvin, Cat Bryars

After enjoying a meal from Zoey's Deli and a welcome to Rupert from select board member and BCRC commissioner, Charlie Rockwell, the meeting was called to order at 4:55PM.

I. Minutes of July 2022 Meeting

Motion (Lierman): Approve as presented. Second by Herrington. Passed unanimously.

II. Public Hearing to Confirm Glastenbury, Manchester Village, and Sandgate Town Plans

Motion to open the hearing (Faesy). Second by Lierman. Question from Lierman about the general town plan adoption and confirmation process answered by Cat Bryars. Motion to close the hearing (Rockwell). Second by Lierman.

Ballot Results: 11 municipal commissioners and 2 special purpose commissioners voted in the affirmative. No votes in the negative. Planning processes for Glastenbury, Sandgate and Manchester Village were approved.

III. Public Hearing to Confirm Act 174 Energy Compliance for Glastenbury, Manchester Village and Sandgate Town Plans

Motion to open the hearing (Faesy). Second by Lierman. No discussion. Motion to close the hearing (Faesy). Second by Lierman.

Ballot results: 11 municipal commissioners and 2 special purpose commissioners voted in the affirmative. No votes in the negative. Glastenbury, Sandgate and Manchester Village plans were deemed to be in compliance with Act 174 Energy requirements.

IV. D&H Rail Trail Project Update

BCRC Environmental Program Manager, Jim Henderson, gave a brief history of the D&H Rail Trail and current grant-funded projects. Rupert received an outdoor recreation grant to improve parking access and signage in collaboration with the Town of Pawlet which will be building a visitor center.

V. Merck Forest Programs

Executive Director, Rob Terry gave an overview of Merck's current programs and plans for the future. Merck is part of a 42,000 acre unfragmented forest block and serves as an important migratory corridor. Merck Forest is a 3,500-acre property with approximately 35 miles of hiking trails and is currently in the midst of a 10-year strategic plan to "build back better."

Education is at the core of Merck's mission to inspire curiosity about natural and working lands, and the organization has formed a partnership with Mettawee Community School.

VI. Rupert Village Trust Activities

Rupert Village Trust President, Jane Davies, gave an overview of projects including the Sheldon Store and Town Green events. The Trust is trying to create a community hub in Rupert's Designated Village Center with events at the Sheldon Store and Town Green, both of which are near the D&H Rail Trail. The Trust has organized several events at the Sheldon Store including board game nights, music, and coffee. During COVID, they quickly pivoted to outdoor events at the Town Green. The Trust has received grants from the Preservation Trust of Vermont, and Senator Leahy's office for building renovations and improvements.

Cat Bryars announced that Rupert recently won a New England regional planning award for the Sheldon Store project. The project was successful in part because of the Town's progressive zoning regulations.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:15 PM.

BCRC

Bennington County Regional Commission

210 SOUTH STREET ● SUITE 6 ● BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201 ● (802) 442-0713

July 17, 2025

Ms. Mary Rogers, Chair, Village Trustees
PO BOX 427
North Bennington, VT 05257
info@villagenorthbennington.org

Re: Village Plan – Confirmation of Planning Process

Dear Ms. Rogers:

The Village of North Bennington approved the *Village of North Bennington, Vermont Municipal Plan* on June 10, 2025 and submitted it to the Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) for review and confirmation of the planning process on June 17, 2025.

The Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) has reviewed the village plan in the context of 24 V.S.A. Section 4350 and by a vote of commissioners on July 17, 2025 has affirmed North Bennington's plan and planning process. The BCRC found that the plan:

(A) is consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. Section 4302;
(B) is compatible with the regional plan
(C) is compatible with the approved plans of other municipalities in the region; and
(D) contains all the elements included in subdivisions 24 V.S.A. Section 4382(a)(1)-(12).

Therefore, the *Village of North Bennington, Vermont Municipal Plan* remains in effect through its expiration date of June 10, 2033, and will be documented as approved by the BCRC. North Bennington's planning process is confirmed pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Section 4350.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this determination.

Sincerely,

William Colvin
Director

BCRC

Bennington County Regional Commission

210 SOUTH STREET ● SUITE 6 ● BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201 ● (802) 442-0713

April 27, 2026

Mr. David Kiernan
PO BOX 127
Peru, VT 05252
zoning@peruvt.org

Re: Municipal Plan – Confirmation of Planning Process

Dear Dave:

The Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) has been reviewing and updating its files and to ensure that all municipalities with a confirmed planning process have received a letter documenting that fact. *This letter is a recognition of prior actions and* ***does not change the current expiration date of your municipal plan.***

The Town of Peru approved the *Town Plan of Peru, VT* on June 15, 2022, and submitted it to the BCRC for review and confirmation of the planning process.

The BCRC reviewed the municipal plan in the context of 24 V.S.A. Section 4350 and by a vote of commissioners on January 19, 2023, confirmed that Town of Peru has a duly adopted plan and a confirmed planning process, per 24 V.S.A. 4302 and 4382. The BCRC found that the plan:

(A) is consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. Section 4302;
(B) is compatible with the regional plan
(C) is compatible with the approved plans of other municipalities in the region; and
(D) contains all the elements included in subdivisions 24 V.S.A. Section 4382(a)(1)-(12).

Therefore, the *Peru Town Plan* remains in effect through its expiration date of June 15, 2030, and will be documented as approved by the BCRC. Peru's planning process is confirmed pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Section 4350. The minutes from the January 19, 2023, BCRC meeting are attached for reference.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this determination.

Sincerely,

William Colvin
Director

Bennington County Regional Commission

MINUTES

Thursday – January 19, 2023
5:30 PM
The Barn at Monument Circle – Bennington

Present: Walter Klinger, Bruce Lierman, Martha Cornwell, Rory Price, Dixie Zens, Dana Rozycki, Michael Fernandez, James Pullman, Catherine Bryars, Megan Herrington

Staff: Jim Henderson, Scott Grimm-Lyon, Callie Fishburn, Jonathan Cooper, Bill Colvin, Mark Anders

After enjoying a meal from Your Belly's Deli, the meeting was called to order at 6:04PM.

I. Minutes of November 2022 Meeting

Motion (Zens): Approve as presented. Second by Klinger. Passed unanimously.

II. Public Hearing to Confirm Peru Town Plan

Motion to open the hearing (Cornwell). Second by Zens. No discussion. Motion to close the hearing (Zens). Second by Lierman.

Ballot Results: Fifteen (15) municipal commissioners and four (4) special purpose commissioners voted in the affirmative. No votes in the negative. Planning process for Peru was approved. Vote tabulations include votes by proxy in advance of the meeting.

III. Public Hearing to Confirm Act 174 Energy Compliance for Peru Town Plan

Motion to open the hearing (Rozycki). Second by Zens. No discussion. Motion to close the hearing (Zens). Second by Cornwell.

Ballot results: Fifteen (15) municipal commissioners and four (4) special purpose commissioners voted in the affirmative. No votes in the negative. Peru was deemed to be in compliance with Act 174 Energy requirements. Vote tabulations include votes by proxy in advance of the meeting.

IV. The Vermont Community Health Equity Partnership

Megan Herrington, District Director of the Bennington Office of Local Health, gave an overview of Health Department services (see attached presentation).

Rory Price, Public Health Specialist at the Bennington Office of Local Health, introduced the Vermont Community Health Equity Partnership (VTCHEP), a program funded by CDC money to advance health equity in the state. The BCRC is the local organization administering the program in Bennington County and working closely with the Office of Local Health (see attached presentation).

Bike Hub Board Member, Bruce Lierman, gave an overview of the Bike Hub and its educational programming funded by a subgrant from VTCHEP (see attached presentation).

V. Overview of the Municipal Health Equity Toolkit

BCRC Regional Planner, Callie Fishburn, gave an overview of the newly developed Municipal Health Equity Toolkit. This toolkit was developed by the state's 11 regional planning commissions to help municipalities incorporate health equity principles into local planning. To accompany the main toolkit document, a resource list and matrix with sample town plan and bylaw language were also developed. View the toolkit: Health Equity Planning Toolkit - Lamoille County Planning Commission (lcpcvt.org)

VI. Overview of the Homeless Health Equity Capacity Grant

BCRC staff members, Scott Grimm-Lyon and Jonathan Cooper gave an overview of the Homeless Health Equity Capacity Grant. The grant was received by Greater Bennington Community Services (GBCS), which has partnered with the BCRC and a steering committee of over a dozen organizations to undertake a 2-phase study: the first phase is an unaccompanied youth needs assessment which is largely complete. The second phase, which is about to begin, will involve working with a consultant to develop a feasibility study for a wellness hub in downtown Bennington (see attached presentation).

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

BCRC

Bennington County Regional Commission

210 SOUTH STREET ● SUITE 6 ● BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201 ● (802) 442-0713

April 27, 2026

Ms. Tara Parks, Executive Assistant
Town of Pownal
511 Center Street
Pownal, VT 05261
executive.assistant@townofpownal.org

Re: Municipal Plan – Confirmation of Planning Process

Dear Tara:

The Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) has been reviewing and updating its files to ensure that all municipalities with a confirmed planning process have received a letter documenting that fact. *This letter is a recognition of prior actions and* ***does not change the current expiration date of your municipal plan.***

The Town of Pownal approved the *Pownal Town Plan* on April 25, 2019, and submitted it to the BCRC for review and confirmation of the planning process.

The BCRC reviewed the municipal plan in the context of 24 V.S.A. Section 4350 and by a vote of commissioners on September 19, 2019, confirmed that the Town of Pownal has a duly adopted plan and a confirmed planning process, per 24 V.S.A. 4302 and 4382. The BCRC found that the plan:

(A) is consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. Section 4302;
(B) is compatible with the regional plan
(C) is compatible with the approved plans of other municipalities in the region; and
(D) contains all the elements included in subdivisions 24 V.S.A. Section 4382(a)(1)-(12).

Therefore, the *Pownal Town Plan* remains in effect through its expiration date of April 25, 2027, and will be documented as approved by the BCRC. Pownal's planning process is confirmed pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Section 4350. The minutes from the September 19, 2019, BCRC meeting are attached for reference.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this determination.

Sincerely,

William Colvin
Director

Bennington County Regional Commission

MINUTES

Thursday – September 19, 2019
5:30 PM
Loose Cannon Café - Bennington, VT

Present: Jock Irons (Woodford), Walt Klinger (Pownal), Ken Harrington (Shaftsbury), Cinda Morse (Shaftsbury), Dixie Zens (Sunderland), Suzy dePeyster (Sandgate), James Salerno (Economic Development), Nancy Faesy (Dorset), Wayn Goodman (Energy), Ed Shea (Woodford), Sheila Kearns (Sandgate), Janet Hurley (Manchester), John LaVecchia (Dorset)

Mike Slattery (Pownal), Chris Damon, Valerie dePeyster, Tim Scoggins,

BRC Staff: Jonathan Cooper, Bill Colvin, Jim Sullivan

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1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair, Janet Hurley called the meeting to order, welcoming commissioners and guests.

2. Approval of July 18, 2019 Minutes

July 18 Minutes approved by unanimous consent.

3. Public Hearing – Approval of municipal plans for Pownal, North Bennington, and Stamford

Required number of votes to approve the municipal plans and confirm the planning processes for the municipalities of Pownal, North Bennington, and Stamford have been submitted. 17 municipal commissioner votes and 21 total votes in favor.

4. Public Hearing – Determination of Energy Compliance for Pownal and Stamford Town Plans

Required number of votes to approve a determination of energy compliance for the Pownal and Stamford town plans have been submitted. 17 municipal commissioner votes / 21 total votes in favor.

5. Regional Economic Development Initiatives

Presentation by Bill Colvin and Jonathan Cooper on economic development programs that the BCRC has been involved with recently. Reviewed evolution of relationship with the regional development corporation (BCIC).

Three major areas: business development, workforce development, and real estate development.

Noted that the organization has worked to bring in approximately $6.8 million to the region over the past 2+ years, over $4 million related to the Putnam Block redevelopment. Noted that BCIC is the owner of the Putnam Block project, allowing for special funding opportunities.

BCRC has an active Workforce Development committee operating under the BCIC, with broad business and public sector participation. Significant amount of focus during staff's meetings with businesses involves discussion of workforce needs, issues, and opportunities. Numerous activities every year: sophomore summit, business open houses, career fairs, newspaper columns about businesses, elementary school business fairs, VT DOL trainings, etc.

Significant amount of effort directed toward support of entrepreneurship. Training program has led to at least three new business starts. CCV-Bennington now offers a program based on the early work of the BCIC/BCRC. Synergistic relationship between CCV, Lightning Jar, BCIC, and others.

Real estate development work includes property ownership that benefits from RDC environmental clean-up and exemption initiatives. Also, availability of grants and loans to support projects such as Putnam Block. Work beginning on environmental remediation for Phase II of the Putnam Block project.

Review of progress on Putnam Block project in downtown Bennington. Now close to 90+ percent leased for Phase I: restaurant, café/bookstore, grocery, medical and professional offices, retail spaces, and a variety of new downtown residences. Very complex project with 21 funding sources and numerous involved financing and development partners.

Have seen significant economic development improvements in last couple of years: increase in home values, reduction in poverty rate, increase in median family income. First back-to-back years for net job growth since the great recession.

BCRC Inter-regional Economic Development Initiatives

- Southern Vermont Economic Development Zone
  44 cooperating towns in Windham and Bennington County.
  Programs to spur business development, implement recruitment and marketing program, support workforce development and other related initiatives.
- Southern Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) – prepared in conjunction with Windham County.
  - Includes overview of key issues and opportunities for the region (workforce, housing, child care, educational facilities, broadband and cell systems, water and sewer infrastructure needs to support development, downtowns and village centers…).
  - Strengthen Business + Support People
  - Need to increase population, improve infrastructure, and build economic capacity.
  - Vital Projects – identification of key projects that moves toward attainment of goals. 71 project ideas submitted for consideration by over 40 entities. Some of the projects included: Putnam Phase II, Wilmington village center project, rail project in Windham County, Lightning Jar, …..
- Southern Vermont Economy Summit at Mount Snow included over 250 attendees.
- SoVermont Campaign launch – sustainable marketing and recruitment initiative. Information about the region and the quality of life available here. Supported by USDA Rural Development – demonstration of broad-based support was valuable in securing that funding.
- Opportunity Zone investments: New initiative identified two census tracts in Bennington as Opportunity Zones – benefits for capital investment in these areas. Prepared a prospectus for investors showing "Opportunity Bennington" zones – downtown as well as industrial/manufacturing sites. Have already seen over $4.5 million investment in the Zone. Opportunity Bennington most active OZ in Vermont.

Q & A

Putnam grocery store: desire to see a store in Phase I so smaller footprint selected. Hope for future growth.

Putnam Phase II: Plan for a five-story building with medical and educational facilities (SVHC, Castleton Nursing program, and 30 units of housing.

Housing development planned for land along Washington Street (another 30 units). Total, all phases, over 100 new housing units in the center of downtown.

Brownfields remediation: removal/securing contaminated soils, UST removal, clean-up related to gas station.

Medical Space at Putnam: some will involve moving a facility from SVMC to free up space at the hospital. Other clinical space would be new facilities.

Regional Employment Growth? Mack Molding, NSK (also major new capital investment),… Dixie Zens spoke to the importance of downtown development in attracting and retaining professional employees that are in demand by area businesses. Dixie also applauded Bill, Jonathan, and the BCRC and BCIC for helping to orchestrate this new development activity.

Southern Vermont College campus? About to go under contract.

6. Other Business and Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM.

BCRC

Bennington County Regional Commission

210 SOUTH STREET ● SUITE 6 ● BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201 ● (802) 442-0713

April 27, 2026

Ms. Paula Iken, Town Administrator
Town of Shaftsbury
PO BOX 409
Shaftsbury, VT 05262
administrator@shaftsburyvt.gov

Re: Municipal Plan – Confirmation of Planning Process

Dear Paula:

The Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) has been reviewing and updating its files to ensure that all municipalities with a confirmed planning process have received a letter documenting that fact. *This letter is a recognition of prior actions and* ***does not change the current expiration date of your municipal plan.***

The Town of Shaftsbury approved the *Shaftsbury Town Plan* on December 2, 2019, and submitted it to the BCRC for review and confirmation of the planning process. Subsequently, the current plan was amended in September 2024; the approved amendment was focused on the incorporation of an Enhanced Energy Plan, and the plan retains its expiration date of December 2, 2027.

The BCRC reviewed the municipal plan in the context of 24 V.S.A. Section 4350 and by a vote of commissioners on July 16, 2020, confirmed that the Town of Shaftsbury has a duly adopted plan and a confirmed planning process, per 24 V.S.A. 4302 and 4382. The BCRC found that the plan:

(A) is consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. Section 4302;
(B) is compatible with the regional plan
(C) is compatible with the approved plans of other municipalities in the region; and
(D) contains all the elements included in subdivisions 24 V.S.A. Section 4382(a)(1)-(12).

Therefore, the *Shaftsbury Town Plan* remains in effect through its expiration date of December 2, 2027, and will be documented as approved by the BCRC. Shaftsbury's planning process is confirmed pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Section 4350. The minutes from the July 16, 2020, BCRC meeting are attached for reference.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this determination.

Sincerely,

William Colvin
Director

Bennington County Regional Commission

MINUTES

Thursday – July 16, 2020
5:30 PM
Zoom Meeting

Present: Janet Hurley, Charlie Rockwell, Nick Zaiac, Megan Herrington, Cynthia Browning, John LaVecchia, Sr., John LaVecchia, Jr., Bruce Lierman, Nancy Faesy, Tyler Yandow

BCRC Staff: Jim Sullivan, Catherine Bryars, Bill Colvin

I. **Welcome and Introductions**

II. **Public Hearing: Consideration of Approval of Town Plans for Arlington, Dorset, Manchester, and Shaftsbury**

The hearing was closed after introductory comments and no discussion, and all ballots counted with 16 municipal representatives voting in favor of approval (13 required); 19 total votes in favor. The plans are approved and the municipal planning processes confirmed.

III. **Public Hearing: Consideration of Approval of Determinations of Energy Compliance for the Arlington, Dorset, and Manchester Town Plans**

The hearing was closed after introductory comments and no discussion, and all ballots counted with 16 municipal representatives voting in favor of approval (13 required); 19 total votes in favor. The plans are approved and the Chair will sign Determinations of Energy Compliance that will be provided to the Public Utility Commission.

IV. **Review and Discussion of Proposed Amendments to the BCRC Bylaws**

Jim Sullivan presented an overview of the proposed changes:

Section 2:

- Change the number of voting commissioners per town from two to one (villages and Glastenbury stay the same, with one). Each town will still have two representatives, but will have to designate a commissioner and a "co-commissioner."

- To be consistent with statute, interest group representatives (other than the economic development representatives) are made non-voting members.
- If a municipality fails to appoint a commissioner, the chair of the municipal planning commission is considered to be the commissioner.

Section 3:

- One vote per municipality (commissioner, or, if unable to vote, the co-commissioner votes).
- Any votes can be done via postal and/or electronic (email) ballot prior to a meeting.

Discussion: Question asked about current and projected total number of commissioners and representation (result of bylaw changes would be to have 17 voting municipal commissioners and 30 total municipal commissioners, five economic development commissioners, and interest group representation from energy, transportation, housing, and public health – and any other interest approved by the commission).

Question about role of co-commissioner (essentially the same as now, bringing local input to the full commission, returning information to their town or village – just not voting on the few items that the full commission is required to vote on – largely regional plan adoption and municipal plan approvals).

Some discussion ensued as to the history of the commission and changing municipal representation over time, current role of the commission, the executive committee, executive director, and staff. Noted the need to be able to ensure that key issues are voted on by a majority of the voting commissioners. With continuing municipal vacancies and lack of participation by many commissioners, quorums have been increasingly difficult to obtain. Thus, the proposed change to consolidate voting representation as well as to specifically authorize mail-in/email-in ballots.

The Bylaw amendments will be voted on in September.

V. **Other Business**

September meeting – also likely to be held via Zoom – will include a presentation on the State's new "Zoning for Great Neighborhoods" report and a related project that the BCRC has been working on involving municipal land use regulations related to housing in our region.

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Sullivan
Executive Director

BCRC

Bennington County Regional Commission

210 SOUTH STREET ● SUITE 6 ● BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201 ● (802) 442-0713

April 27, 2026

Mr. David Kiernan, Zoning Administrator
Town of Sunderland
104 Mountain View Road
Sunderland, VT 05250
zoningadmin@sunderlandvt.org

Re: Municipal Plan – Confirmation of Planning Process

Dear Dave:

The Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) has been reviewing and updating its files to ensure that all municipalities with a confirmed planning process have received a letter documenting that fact. *This letter is a recognition of prior actions and* ***does not change the current expiration date of your municipal plan.***

The Town of Sunderland approved the *Sunderland Town Plan* on August 20, 2018, and submitted it to the BCRC for review and confirmation of the planning process. Subsequently, the current plan was amended in December 2023; the approved amendments were minor, and the plan retains its expiration date of August 20, 2026.

The BCRC reviewed the municipal plan in the context of 24 V.S.A. Section 4350 and by a vote of commissioners on September 20, 2018, confirmed that Sunderland has a duly adopted plan and a confirmed planning process, per 24 V.S.A. 4302 and 4382. The BCRC found that the plan:

(A) is consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. Section 4302;
(B) is compatible with the regional plan
(C) is compatible with the approved plans of other municipalities in the region; and
(D) contains all the elements included in subdivisions 24 V.S.A. Section 4382(a)(1)-(12).

Therefore, the *Sunderland Town Plan* remains in effect through its expiration date of August 20, 2026, and will be documented as approved by the BCRC. Sunderland's planning process is confirmed pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Section 4350. The minutes from the September 20, 2018, BCRC meeting are attached for reference.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this determination.

Sincerely,

William Colvin
Director

Bennington County Regional Commission

MINUTES

Thursday – September 20, 2018
5:30 PM
Masonic Lodge – Main Street, Bennington, VT

Present: Kayla Becker (Catamount Connections), Michelle Marocco (ACT), Andrea Malinowski (RiseVT), Jim Sullivan (BCRC Staff), Kerry Sullivan, Walt Klinger (Pownal), Ed Shea (Woodford), Donald Campbell (Conservation), Jim Trimarchi (SVMC), Dare Meunier (ACT), Cinda Morse (Shaftsbury), Victoria Silsby (The Collaborative), Chris Damon (North Bennington), Dan Monks (Bennington), Judy Boehlert (Sandgate), Suzanne dePeyster (Sandgate), Nancy Faesy (Dorset), John LaVecchia (Dorset), Janet Hurley (Manchester), T.J. Anania (ACT), Dan Bollinger (The Collaborative), Bill Colvin (BCRC Staff), Rose Morrison (Catamount Connections)

Following a light meal and tour of the Catamount Connections facility, the meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

I. Minutes of July BCRC Meeting

Motion (Morse): Approve as presented. Second by Boehlert. Passed unanimously.

II. Public Hearing – Sunderland Town Plan: review/approval under 24 VSA Section 4350 and 4352

Hurley opened the hearing on the Sunderland Town Plan approval. Action also is requested on confirmation of the town planning process. No comments. Monks moved and Shea seconded closing the hearing. Passed unanimously. Ballots counted: both questions passed with 25 total votes in favor and none opposed.

III. Catamount Connections – Kayla Becker and Rose Morrison

Presentation on Catamount Connections and Bennington Promise Community grant (attached). Catamount Connections focuses on family support services in the greater Bennington area. Needs and opportunities identified through a series of Community Cafes. A number of common

themes identified, among them: central place to connect, water feature, strong family support, and networking opportunities.

A splash pad for the community was planned using some of the Promise Community funds, in collaboration with other partners, the result being a park to be built at Merchants Park in downtown Bennington.

Discussed Kindergarten readiness, with a significant focus on supporting parents/families.

Catamount Connections is set up as a place to connect – regular cafes, support groups, educational programming. Often includes programming for parents with onsite childcare. Play groups for children as well as programming for children. Many community partners have been involved in developing and supporting Catamount Connections. Continued involvement of those organizations is key.

Over 1,300 visits in the first three months for drop in visits and many special programs for adults and children.

Discussed the future of Catamount Connections – programming, new resources such as a parent workspace, and needs for funding.

Question: How did/do people find Catamount Connections? Kayla started out by connecting through a babywearing group she started – grew rapidly through Facebook. Connections quickly extended beyond that group and now is an established network supported by various social media outlets.

Question: Monetizing offerings? Open hours are and will be free, but special programs do raise revenues. Discussed concept of raising funds for social infrastructure (like Catamount Connections) as a key piece of community that deserves support.

IV. <u>The Collaborative – Regional Prevention Primer and Youth Risk Behavior Survey</u>

Presentation on Youth Risk Behavior Survey (TJ Anania and Dan Bollinger) – available at:

https://www.mentimeter.com/public/20777ce4a350fbe877c461ca502f9023.

Reviewed information about substance use and related risky behaviors in Bennington County, with comparisons to Vermont and the US. Alcohol and marijuana use among youth in the area is rising. Discussed reasons for observed trends. Provided a demographic breakdown of Bennington County high school students – race, sexual orientation, etc.

Discussed reported depression and attempted suicide rates and noted particularly high rate amongst LGBTQ students.

Developmental assets – key supports, opportunities, and relationships needed by youth in the region. Importance of youth feeling valued by the community was discussed; room for improvement in Bennington County. Noted Youth Appreciation Day, Collaborative Camp, RiseVT, Refuse to Use, parenting classes, and other resources being used to build developmental assets. Hopefully, will start to see improvements in these numbers by growing these resources.

Presentation on Bennington County Regional Prevention Primer (Victoria Silsby): "A Primer on Health, Wellness, and Substance Misuse Prevention Planning in Bennington County" (copy attached).

The Primer focuses on techniques to reduce youth (as well as adult) substance misuse. Victoria highlighted the high cost of substance use and misuse, locally and nationally. Reviewed evidence of the need for a multilayered prevention strategy and the importance of policies and ordinances developed and implemented at the municipal level. Some of Manchester's recently revised ordinances were given as examples of the type of action that can be taken locally. Specific ideas for municipal actions were reviewed and a table provided in the Primer includes sample language for municipal policies for local plans and implementation techniques, regulatory and otherwise, taken from towns and villages around the region.

Challenges associated with enforcement were noted. Victoria noted that in her experience a lot of enforcement happens informally, but effectively, once the law is in place. Examples given regarding smoke-free public venues and events.

Victoria also pointed to sections of the Primer that address the importance of having opportunities for active recreation, facilitating walking and biking to destinations, and other positive aspects of community life.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.