

1/10/05

## VPA LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The Legislature is back in session and spent the first week in organizational matters, including election of the House Speaker and Senate President ProTem, the Governor's Address and the appointment of committees.

The appointment of committees represents a considerable change – to be expected with the change of party leadership in the House, but also in the Senate with some long-time chairs replaced. The new blood and new leadership, seen by many as a healthy and reinvigorating, are also immediately the subject of speculation as to what changes and new priorities will emerge.

VPA member Rep. Sue Minter won a seat on House Transportation. Congratulations, Sue.

Ten senate bills and 23 house bills are now on the Legislative Council's web site:

<http://www.leg.state.vt.us/docs/service2.cfm>.

These will be formally introduced and assigned to committees; this list will grow rapidly now, and continue through the session.

Some of these that might be of interest to planners:

H.12, which would limit municipal regulation of amateur radio antennas – sponsored by Reps. Brennan, Nitka and Trombley

S.7, relating to licensure of landscape architects. The bill as drafted includes “planning” within the definition of “the practice of landscape architecture”, but the bill also includes the following exemption:

d) This chapter shall not be construed to limit or restrict in any manner the right of a practitioner of another profession or occupation from carrying on in the usual manner any of the functions incidental to that profession or occupation, including landscape designers undertaking work that does not require a permit, foresters preparing forest management plans, and professional planners.

S.8, relating to automatic legislative approval of municipal charter changes, unless objection is raised by the Attorney General or 6 senators or 30 house members.

S.9, allowing municipalities to regulate (somewhat) the application of pesticides.

We are aware of other bills being drafted, some from last session such as Rep. Kiss' outdoor lighting bill. We will be watching for these and other in the subject area of stormwater, growth centers, prime ag soils, brown fields, climate change, Section 248 and wind energy, mobile home parks - - besides the inevitable odd Chapter 117 bills and the perennial concern over funding - which looks especially grim this year from the Governor's address. Stay tuned...

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