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VPA EC Meeting Minutes

September 21, 2018

In-Person Meeting

Catamount Arts Center

St. Johnsbury, VT

Executive Committee members present: K. McCarthy, S. Lotspeich, D. Rugh, A. Weinhausen, M. Tuttle, S. Hadd, P. Conner, R. Stone, S. Jensen, C. Sawyer and H. Wilkins

VPA Members: M. Boulanger

Meeting began at 10:09 a.m.

1. Announcements & Agenda Modifications

M. Tuttle proposed adding an item to the agenda under new business to discuss the locations of the EC's in-person meetings.

2. Minutes of July 20, 2018 Executive Committee Meetings

Action: Motion to approve minutes of July 20, 2018 Executive Committee meeting:
1) A. Weinhausen. 2) M. Tuttle. *Motion passes unanimously.*

3. Treasurers Report for July and August 2018

S. Lotspeich gave the Treasurer's Reports for July and August 2018. In July VPA had expenses related to wrapping up the spring conference, including paying for the post-conference event at Worthy Burger and for the catering at Vermont Law School (VLS). VPA also paid Chip Sawyer for his mileage attending downtown board meetings. VPA received a small amount of income related to conference registration fees and dues payments. In August, VPA paid Josh Brower's speaker stipend from the spring conference and the room fee for Catamount Arts where the September EC meeting is being held. One challenging item on the August report was a contested conference registration fee. An attorney contested a late conference registration charge on his credit card, and as a result VPA had to put \$50 back in its PayPal account to cover the disputed registration fee. Also, PayPal charged a \$20 late fee due to the contested charge that likely will not be recouped. This was a frustrating situation to deal with, but it's unlikely VPA will recoup the PayPal fee nor will VPA ask for repayment of the fee from the attorney. That said, the particularly attorney who caused VPA to incur the fee will be made aware that the fee was due to his or her contesting their VPA conference registration fee.

Action: Motion to approve July and August 2018 Treasurer's Reports: 1) P. Conner. 2) A. Weinhausen. *Motion passes unanimously.*

4. **Old Business**

A. **NNECAPA Survey (Final Looks)**

M. Tuttle described the survey from VPA to get feedback from membership regarding the upcoming NNECAPA reorganization and passing a joint budget at the upcoming NNECAPA membership meeting. Distribution of this survey was delayed because VPA and the Act 250 Commission also had sent out surveys over the last month or so. Keep an eye out for it in the coming days.

B. **VPA Act 250 Survey (Results)**

K. McCarthy gave kudos to M. Kane, R. Mahony, S. Murray and P. Elmer Hough for their hard work in putting the VPA Act 250 survey together. There was a relatively small sample size. 37% of respondents were from Chittenden County and 33% were municipal employees. For many criteria (1, 2, 3, 4, 8A, 9B, 9C, 9D, 9E) a majority of the respondents preferred that the State be the reviewer, not the District Commissions, which is interesting. The results indicated that regional review was preferred for Criteria 5B and 9A. For now, the results will remain in-house because they came solely from Survey Gizmo and were not reviewed thoroughly or processed by the survey's preparers yet.

C. **Act 250 Conference Closeout (Payments to P. Elmer Hough and R. Stone) and Draft Summary**

VPA intends to put a policy paper together based on the membership survey responses, the results of the spring conference and the various subcommittees of VPA's Future of Act 250 Working Group. VPA is working to figure out the best way to synthesize the information given VPA's broad membership base and the wide variety of viewpoints within the organization. The general protocol, at least for legislative position papers, is for the Legislative Committee to discuss the matter, forward a recommendation to the EC, then, the EC will consider an possibly pass a motion that sets the organization's position and provides direction to the Legislative Liaison. A similar process should work for distributing VPA's ultimate position on the Future of Act 250.

K. McCarthy solicited feedback on the best way for VPA's Future of Act 250 Working Group to gather and process all the information that has come the organization's way. The Working Group will likely create a subcommittee to analyze the information and try and group it into areas where there's commonality. From there, the information will be presented both to the Working Group and the EC. M. Tuttle suggested that the structure of "what's working," "what's not" and "what should be improved" could be maintained for the summary report since that's how the information was gathered initially. While including specifics in summary report is best, the summary doesn't need to address all criteria.

As far as closing out the financials, S. Lotspeich provided a summary of the spring conference finances. The loose ends are how much VPA should pay P. Elmer Hough and R. Stone for their work on the conference summary and at the conference itself. VPA did quite well on income, about \$10,500, while expenses were limited to \$7,000. This leaves a roughly \$3,500 surplus from which VPA could pay P. Elmer Hough and R. Stone for their work. In June, the EC authorized paying P. Elmer Hough \$2,000 for preparation of the summary report, so S. Lotspeich will request an invoice from her for this amount. The conference budget allocated \$450 to pay R. Stone for her time and the

expertise that she brought to the conference, including creating the posters and her facilitation work. K. McCarthy proposes to pay her \$750 for her work, up \$300 from the budgeted amount, and a discussion ensued. Much of R. Stone's facilitation work went directly into the summary report and was very helpful. S. Lotspeich noted that this taps into R. Stone's professional expertise and work, which is different than general conference organization for which VPA members volunteer (for example, the fall conference, NNECAPA and other VPA events and conferences). There is roughly \$1,500 in conference revenue that was not anticipated, largely due to the award of the High Meadows Fund Grant. Most conferences are planned so that the revenue and expenses equal out in the end. Following the discussion, K. McCarthy proposes that a larger discussion be had at a later date regarding whether VPA EC members who volunteer to put on conferences like NNECAPA should receive a stipend.

Action: Motion to pay R. Stone \$750 with the understanding that the scope of her work on the conference expanded beyond what was initially planned: 1) S. Lotspeich. 2) A. Weinhagen. *Motion passes unanimously.* R. Stone abstained.

5. Committee Check-in Reports

A. Legislative Committee

A. Weinhagen gave the Legislative Committee's report. Very little has happened over the summer. The accessory on-farm business bill (Act 143) that passed has been the focus of some discussion over the summer. A. Weinhagen plans to reconvene the Legislative Committee very soon to discuss priorities for the 2019 biennium. Much of the focus in the Legislature may be on changes or improvements to Act 250.

B. Professional Development Committee

P. Conner reports that little movement has happened on a fall conference. There is an in-person EC meeting scheduled for November 16th in Middlebury, which is probably going to be the best date and location of the Annual Meeting. P. Conner will try and organize the Committee and brainstorm some topics. S. Jensen suggested reaching out to folks in the Middlebury/Addison County area to engage them in conference planning. A significant chunk of time at the conference will need to be dedicated to the Annual Meeting to discuss bylaw revisions and NNECAPA reorganization. R. Stone proposed to use some of the conference to do placemaking exercise in light of the large bridge construction project that's being conducted in downtown Middlebury.

C. NNECAPA

M. Tuttle provided the NNECAPA report. There was no NNECAPA meeting in August, though there will be a NNECAPA budget discussion in September. The NNECAPA conference is October 21st in Maine near Mount Desert Island. The biggest item will be the passing of new NNECAPA bylaws and a budget geared towards working with the three state associations and reorganizing them into state sections. A relatively significant number of VPA members will be attending the NNECAPA conference this year, which will be more casual than past conferences and will be "retreat style."

D. Awards Committee

D. Rugh reported that Andy Montroll won the NNECAPA Citizen Planner of the Year award.

E. Communications Committee

S. Hadd gave Communications Committee report. The good news is that the website has not been hacked recently. The Committee is generally in a holding pattern until NNECAPA reports back on the specifics with regard to the new website platform for when VPA becomes a state section of NNECAPA that will be modeled on the APA website.

F. Nominating Committee

H. Wilkins gave the Nominating Committee report. R. Amore and H. Wilkins are the only members of the Nominating Committee. They've divided up responsibilities and will begin soliciting individuals who may be interested in participating in the EC in the future. H. Wilkins will be reaching out to current board members to gauge their interest in continuing on the EC. There is also a vacancy on the Nominating Committee, which is a three-member committee. Only one EC member can be on the committee, so H. Wilkins will also be trying to fill the empty seat.

G. Social Committee

R. Stone is trying to organize a social event in connection with the fall conference once there's a better idea of where the conference will be.

H. VPA Act 250 Working Group

S. Jensen gave a brief update on Working Group's activities, even though there was a good overview earlier in the meeting. A number of smaller groups have been meeting over the summer to inform the summary report. The Working Group is focused on moving from the conference summary to compiling a policy paper for the organization, and S. Jensen has solicited input from members of the Executive Committee. Meanwhile, the larger Future of Act 250 Commission has wrapped up its public listening sessions, so now all groups will be working on producing final work products in a relatively short period of time.

6. New Business

A. V.S.A. Subcommittee Update

S. Hadd summarized the subcommittee's activities on updating the planning sections of the Vermont Statutes Annotated. Some members of the subcommittee have focused on plan elements for municipal plans while others are focusing on plan elements for regional plans. The full subcommittee is supposed to meet in the first week of October. On both the municipal and regional plan element sides, they are looking at restructuring and reorganizing the plan element goals with an eye toward what other states are doing instead of reinventing the wheel or creating yet more goals. Some subcommittee members are curious about a deadline and whether the EC has a specific one. The EC's feeling on this is that the subcommittee should stay the course and continue its work without a firm deadline for a final product. This is largely due to uncertainty about the upcoming legislative session and the high likelihood that Act 250 issues will take up a lot of the Legislature's, and possibly VPA's, focus at least in the next year.

B. Request from VECAN for sponsorship

VECAN has asked VPA to sponsor its annual conference. VPA historically sponsors this event at the \$250 level. A free conference registration comes with a sponsorship at this level.

Action: Motion to sponsor the 2018 VECAN conference at the \$250 level: 1) D. Rugh. 2) A. Weinhagen. *Motion passes unanimously.*

C. VPA Book Exchange

H. Wilkins reports there's some interest to have a book exchange table at the fall conference, likely in Middlebury. K. Niemczyk, former Woodstock Town Planner, has a large number of planning-related books that he'd like to get into the hands of others as part of his retirement. H. Wilkins asked if there were others who were interested. K. Niemczyk wanted to donate these books to interested individuals, so no money would be exchanged. It would solely be for the organization members' benefit. H. Wilkins wanted to make sure this was acceptable to the EC. The only concern is that these books don't end up becoming the property of VPA since the organization doesn't maintain a library anymore. (The remnants of VPA's library mostly ended up at the Burnham Library in Colchester so those books would be available through inter-library loan.) Whoever sets up the exchange must ensure that the books get returned to those who brought them to the conference if it turns out that they are unwanted.

D. In-Person Meeting Summary

M. Tuttle provided a quick summary of our in-person meetings and the issues with getting turn-out from local planners. A discussion ensued about whether it was worth continuing the in-person meetings and how to best engage local planners to attend the meetings. Hosting local meetings does increase the visibility of the organization and increases the geographic diversity of the EC long-term. However, most in-person meetings are only attended by members of the EC, not by other VPA members. Some feel that we should have our in-person EC meetings in the locations that are most convenient for EC members. The southern VT meeting at Bromley was particularly poorly attended and was discouraging for those who planned and attended it. It was proposed that instead of quarterly in-person meetings, we hold more frequent but also more convenient in-person meetings. It was suggested that the EC hold in-person meetings every other month but in locations that are convenient for most EC members, like in Chittenden and Washington Counties. This idea will be discussed more at future EC meetings.

Next Meeting: October 19th by Conference Call.

Kudos to M. Tuttle for organizing the September in-person meeting in St. Johnsbury.

7. Adjourn

Action: Motion to adjourn: 1) M. Tuttle. 2) S. Jensen. *Motion passes unanimously.* Meeting adjourned at 11:51 a.m.