

1 **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING**  
2 **NORTHWEST REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
3 ***February 22, 2017 Draft Meeting Minutes***  
4

5 The meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held at Northwestern Medical Center in the St.  
6 Albans.

7  
8 **ATTENDANCE:**

9 Commissioners: See attached. A quorum was present to conduct business.

10 Staff: C. Dimitruk and T. Newton

11 Guests: D. Rugh and T. Benton.

12  
13 Chair B. Buermann began the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

14  
15 **ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA:** None. B. Buermann noted that commission reports were  
16 submitted in writing this month.

17  
18 **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, OPENING REMARKS:** B. Buermann welcomed everyone to the  
19 meeting.

20  
21 **OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

22  
23 **MINUTES:**

24 B. Buermann asked if there were any amendments to the January meeting minutes. There  
25 were none.

26  
27 *Y. Dandurand motioned to accept the January 2017 meeting minutes as written. G. Carton*  
28 *seconded. All in favor.*

29  
30 **COMMISSION REPORTS**

31 B. Buermann noted that the commission reports would be given in writing instead of verbally at  
32 the meeting. He asked if there are any questions on written commission reports. A. Larocque  
33 said that she appreciated having the written report in advance of the meeting.

34  
35 **PROJECT AND POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION – SWANTON WIND:**

36 W. Irwin gave an overview of the proposed Swanton Wind project. He stated that the  
37 Committee had reviewed the project over the course of several months and had listened to  
38 testimony from the applicant and from project opponents. W. Irwin explained that the  
39 Committee had previously recommended, and the Board had previously authorized, NRPC's  
40 intervention into the case before the Public Service Board. He noted that NRPC had retained  
41 an attorney to work on the case. W. Irwin then read the following recommendation of the  
42 Policy/Project Review Committee to the Board:

1  
2 *The Project and Policy Review Committee has found that the project does not conform with a*  
3 *number of the provisions in the September 2, 2015 regional plan at minimum with respect to*  
4 *impacts to natural resources, aesthetics and orderly development of the region.*

5  
6 *The Policy and Project Review Committee recommends to the Board of Commissioners that*  
7 *NRPC endorse this finding and use it to guide participation in the Section 248 Certificate of*  
8 *Public Good proceedings.*

9  
10 K. Waite asked why the date of the regional plan was inserted into the recommendation and  
11 asked if the issues raised in the recommendation were raised when other wind projects in the  
12 region were proposed. W. Irwin stated that the Committee wanted clarity in regard to the  
13 Regional Plan that is in effect in the process and he stated that he had not been on the Board  
14 when decisions on similarly sized wind projects had been proposed. C. Steen noted that the  
15 Swanton Wind project is much larger than any other wind project that has been proposed in  
16 the region both in number of turbines and height of turbines.

17  
18 G. Bilodeau asked if the project was going to provide a direct monetary public benefit to the  
19 Town of Swanton. N. Speer noted the applicant has proposed \$150,000 a year payment to the  
20 Town as a starting point for negotiation, but that the amount may change. S. Jensen asked for  
21 clarification regarding whether or not the amount is in addition to taxes. T. Newton clarified  
22 that the amount would be in addition to property taxes.

23  
24 G. Carton asked if the Board should accept the recommendation without having an open  
25 discussion about the project. W. Irwin stated that the Board could take whatever time it  
26 needed to make a decision regarding the recommendation, but noted that NRPC's legal counsel  
27 had requested clarity on the organization's position.

28  
29 *G. Carton moved to have the Board enter Executive Session to discuss the project as it is in*  
30 *pending civil litigation to which the commission is a party. A. Larocque seconded the motion. K.*  
31 *Waite moved to amend the motion to note that the Executive Session was needed for the*  
32 *purpose of discussing legal strategy and that premature general public knowledge of the*  
33 *discussion would place the commission at a substantial disadvantage. G. Carton accepted the*  
34 *amendment. All in favor.*

35  
36 Executive Session.

37  
38 *Y. Dandurand motioned to exit executive session. G. Carton seconded the motion. All in favor.*

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2 *K. Waite motioned to ratify the recommendation of the Policy/Project Review Committee*  
3 *regarding the Swanton Wind project. G. Carton seconded. The motion passed with two*  
4 *abstentions (G. Bilodeau and W. Irwin).*

5  
6 **MISSISQUOI BRIDGE CAUSEWAY SCOPING REPORT:**

7 C. Dimitruk provided an overview of the project and explained that Transportation Advisory  
8 Committee (TAC) had recommended Option B to the Board. Option B would spend remaining  
9 earmark funding on other types of transportation and water quality related projects in the  
10 region but still support long term removal of both Missisquoi Bay and Carry Bay causeways. W.  
11 Irwin stated that the Policy/Project Review Committee had also reviewed the potential options  
12 for spending the remaining earmark funding and the Committee agreed with TAC's  
13 recommendation. C. Dimitruk stated that there will be an upcoming public meeting regarding  
14 the removal of the causeway and use of the earmark funding. L. Scangas asked about the  
15 geographical area in which the earmark spending could be used if Option B was chosen by  
16 VTrans. C. Dimitruk said she believed the funding would have to be spent in the Missisquoi  
17 Basin and/or within 50 miles of the project site.

18  
19 B. Buermann stated that removing the proposed 300 foot section of the causeway wouldn't  
20 have much effect on water quality in the area. He noted that D. Borthwick-Leslie has always  
21 stated that the Carry Bay causeway must also be removed if Missisquoi Bay causeway was to be  
22 removed in order to have substantial water quality benefits. The TAC generally agreed that  
23 spending the earmark on transportation-related and water quality-related project in the  
24 watershed would be a more effective way to spend the funds than on the removal of 300 feet  
25 of the Missisquoi Bay causeway.

26  
27 *K. Waite motioned to ratify TAC recommendation as long as the earmark is spent within the*  
28 *Missisquoi Bay watershed. G. Bilodeau seconded. All in favor.*

29  
30 **PLAN APPROVAL AND CONFIRMATION OF PLANNING EFFORTS – GEORGIA AND GRAND ISLE:**

31 R. Brown provided an overview of requests from the towns of Georgia and Grand Isle to provide  
32 regional approval of their municipal plans. She stated that the Plan Review Committee held a  
33 public hearing and recommended that the Georgia and Grand Isle Town Plans receive regional  
34 approval.

35  
36 *A. Voegele motioned to accept the Plan Review Committee's recommendation and regionally*  
37 *approve the municipal plans for the Georgia and Grand Isle. H. Garrett seconded. All in favor.*

1 R. Brown then provided an overview of the request of Georgia and Grand Isle to confirm each  
2 town's continuing planning process. She noted that the Plan Review Committee recommended  
3 that the continuing planning process in each community be confirmed.

4

5 *L. Scangus motioned to accept the Plan Review Committee's recommendation and confirm the*  
6 *continuing planning processes for Georgia and Grand Isle. B. Morris seconded. All in favor.*

7

8 **COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

9 None.

10

11 **ADJOURN**

12 *G. Carton moved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.*

DRAFT