

**NVDA Town Plan Review Committee Hearing Minutes  
Regional Approval of Barton and Glover Town Plans  
Wednesday, April 11, 2018 at 6:00 P.M.  
Glover Town Hall, Glover Road**

From Town Plan Review Committee: Jeanne Desrochers, Coventry; Steve Pitkin, Albany; Justin Barton-Caplin, Barton (abstaining from Barton review); Sten Lium, Concord

NVDA Staff: Alison Low

Representing Barton: David Snedeker, Barton Planning Commission and NVDA Exec. Dir., Nate Sicard, Planning Commission; Sylvain Gagnon, Planning Commission;

Representing Glover: Ann Creaven, Planning Commission\*; Carmela Young, Planning Commission, Liz Nelson, Planning Commission, Nick Ecker-Racz, citizen at large; Mariel Hesse, Planning Commission\*, Randy Williams, Planning Commission; Jack Sumberg, ex-officio Planning Commission\*, Jim Bowes, citizen at large, Bethany Dunbar, citizen at large, Mike Ladd, ex-officio Planning Commission

\*Denotes participation on the energy committee

Prior to the opening of the hearing, the committee voted to have Jeanne Desrochers act as Chair. The hearing opened at 6:40 p.m.

Alison explained the purpose of the hearing, which was critical to the confirmation process [outlined in statute](#). The staff reviews had found both plans to be compliant with statute, but in order to keep the hearing process from feeling like a top-down decision, the NVDA board prefers a more collaborative discussion with each community requesting approval in order to discuss planning priorities and ways NVDA may be able to assist in the future.

Jeanne asked the Barton Planning Commissioners to describe the plan update process. Was it considered a major or minor update, for example? Dave Snedeker stated that it was largely a major update, since the last plan was written in 2007 and had expired back in 2012. Since then several statutory changes affecting planning had taken place, and the Village of Orleans had expressed an interest in receiving Village Center designation. (Barton Village already had designation, but the designation had expired because the plan was expired.) The intent is to establish village center designation for both villages. Also, the planning commission has been working on an amendment to the zoning bylaw that would direct new development toward existing centers already served by off-site sewer and water.

A substantial amount of information was added to the Utilities and Facilities section. Steve Pitkin wanted to know why the Barton has such high rates for water and sewer. Nate Sicard elaborated on some of the issues facing the systems, which essentially amounted to a lot of fixed costs spread over a relatively small population. First, he pointed out the fixed rates for users established no equity for actual usage. The new pricing applies a base charge, plus a gallon charge. Also, the town has restructured employment in order to reduce overhead. Services such as testing and systems operations are now contracted out.

Steve Pitkin wanted to know if there was capacity for growth. Nate Sicard replied that the sewer system was currently running at about half maximum. Jeanne Desrochers posed a question about

Glover's dedicated capacity, which was established in 2009. Nick Ecker-Racz replied that Glover has not used it. Nate pointed out that the inter-municipal agreement between Barton Village and Glover has expired. Also, as Glover adds more connections, they will have to look at the BOD (organic load) levels.

Sten Lium wanted to know how Act 46 was impacting Barton. Dave pointed out that Barton voted to consolidate with other towns, but the other towns had voted against it. There will be another vote on this.

Jeanne wanted to know about the efforts to market the industrial park. Dave replied that they are increasing efforts to attract tenants, e.g. offering favorable utility rates through Orleans electric, and possibly building on spec. So far there has only been interest from solar developers.

Jeanne wanted to know if hydro power is on the table. Dave responded that there was a study done for Crystal Lake falls, but it was not found to be cost-effective. Barton Electric does have existing hydro power facility in West Charleston.

Ann Creaven wanted to know about expansion of solar in Barton. Dave replied that the town initially supported a proposed development on Aldrich Lane, but then withdrew support after discovering that it would burden the ratepayers. This is a larger issue concerning grid constraint – which is outlined in the proposed amendment to the Regional Energy Plan. At this point, new developments – even those on preferred sites, such as the closed landfill – will have cost ramifications for the utility.

Discussion touched on the recent efforts to consolidate emergency services. Nick Ecker-Racz asked about consolidating the village-owned utilities – was that a possibility? Dave replied that an earlier iteration of the plan had recommendations to explore this, but people asked to have the language removed for this update. Nate Sicard added that the fire departments are currently considering joint management.

Commendations came from Jeanne and Sten, with Jeanne noting that the plan was very precise and clear. Jeanne moved to recommend approval of the Barton Plan from the full board of NVDA. Steve seconded the motion. The motion passed with Jeanne, Steve, and Sten voting in favor. Justin abstained.

Alison gave Barton representatives a copy of the Village Center Designation checklist and reminded them that NVDA could assist with the application.

Next on the agenda was Glover. Randy Williams noted that the last town plan (2011) was only a technical update, so this plan was significantly reworked to make it an “active working document.” The plan amendment contains a Health and Well Being section – something that is not required in statute but is important to Glover in that it reinforces positive aspects of the community and addresses an issue that is especially critical for lower-income residents.

Additionally, the energy section required much research and updating, particularly since there is a lot of new solar development. The town has a very active energy committee, and they have been very aggressive in pursuing efficiency and weatherization initiatives. Activities have included hosting workshops, as well as working with nearby towns.

Nick Ecker-Racz pointed out that the town has a large seasonal population, so it was important to keep them involved in the planning process. This was largely accomplished with the cooperation of the Lake Associations. There was a community survey, although it was felt that the return was fairly low. A number of strategies were discussed for improving response next time, such as including copies of surveys in the tax bill.

Steve wanted to know where the Town Green is located. It's in Glover Village and is currently the site of civic and community events, such as the bike and duck races. Also, there are plans to host a farmers' market there this summer.

There was a broader discussion of recent water quality legislative initiatives, such as the State Shoreland Regulations of 2014 (which apply to bodies of water 10 acres or more) and Act 64. Jack Sumberg discussed the town's efforts to address road runoff. The town has committed to Orange Book standards and has applied for grants (such as Better Backroads) to address runoff. There are 56 miles of backroads in Glover, and Jack pointed out that the town has been proactive in meeting water challenges. Several ditches have already been rip-rapped, and culverts have been replaced. Also, the Shadow Lake Association eradicated milfoil by establishing a hot-water boat wash.

The planning commission was commended for including a list of businesses in town. Randy noted that the brick house in the village (the Barrows house) has just been purchased by a dentist from Alaska, and he intends to open his practice there.

Justin asked about the town's work with Local Motion. Randy noted that this collaboration was a draw for the community that was non-invasive (i.e. non-regulatory). The town is encouraging visitor tourism, and there are a number of bicycling maps promoting the area.

Jeanne commented on the quality and thoroughness of the flood resilience section. Jack noted that the town had contracted with Northwoods Stewardship Center. This work was made possible by a Municipal Planning Grant.

It was noted that the school population is steady, and this can be attributed to the quality education that the children receive.

The Health and Wellbeing Committee intends to pursue a number of initiatives from the plan. Justin reminded them that the Vermont Department of Health could assist.

At this point, Steve made the motion to recommend approval of the Glover Plan from the full board of NVDA. Justin seconded the motion. The motion passed, with all voting in favor.

Alison gave Glover representatives a copy of the Village Center designation checklist (to reestablish designation for Glover and West Glover Villages) and reminded them that NVDA could assist with the application.

Steve made the motion to close the hearing. The motion passed. The hearing closed at 7:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Low