

Danville Regional Plan Review Hearing

Thursday, November 21, 2024, 5:00 p.m., Danville Town Hall

From NVDA board/staff: Paul Brouha, Sutton and board member; Mike Metcalf, Greensboro and board member; Bobbi Magoon, Unified Towns and Gores and board member; Alison Low, staff

From Danville: Alison Despathy, Danville Planning Commission Chair; Rob Balivet, Danville Planning Commission; Audrey Deprospero, Assistant to the Selectboard; Greg Prior, resident

Prior to the start of the hearing, the committee appointed Paul Brouha to chair the meeting.

The hearing opened at 5:07 p.m.

Alison Low offered to be a scribe. Paul asked Alison to explain the purpose of the hearing. The hearing is required in [24 VSA §4350](#). When determining whether to “confirm” the planning efforts of a community, the regional planning commission first has to determine if the community has a duly adopted plan. The regional planning commission will therefore review and approve the plan after a properly noticed hearing where they can take comments. If the plan does all of the following, it will be approved by the full board:

The plan:

(A) is consistent with the goals established in section 4302 of this title;

(B) is compatible with its regional plan;

(C) is compatible with approved plans of other municipalities in the region; and

(D) contains all the elements included in subdivisions 4382(a)(1)-(12) of this title.

A staff review of the Danville Plan was completed, finding that the plan met the statutory requirements for approval.

First, the regional plan review committee wanted to know if the Danville Plan it was a major update. The planning commission felt it to be so because 1) the plan had been revised to receive substantial deference in Section 248 proceedings for renewable energy projects; and 2) the plan put a stronger emphasis on implementation. Regarding the latter, the planning commission explained that the earlier plan had some great ideas, but not enough “beef” to lead to action. The new plan has clearly defined objectives, goals, and strategies. Additionally, the plan is accompanied by a schedule that will be updated annually. The region plan review committee commended the inclusion of the schedule and noted that coordinating the schedule with the selectboard was extremely helpful.

Other changes noted to the plan were the completion of the LVRT, which is now a major recreation attraction, and the pending completion of the historic train station on the Peacham Road, which will become a recreation hub.

What is next for the planning commission? The Planning Commission indicated that they intend to revisit zoning districts. This will coincide with a review of the regional planning commission's future land use maps, which are currently under development as per Act 181. There is concern that 3-acre zoning can lead to sprawl. Another priority is to review the historic buildings currently listed in State of Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey. This came out of concern over certain buildings being destroyed. A review of the HSS Survey would hopefully identify a grouping of the town's most significant structures.

It was noted that the plan called for updating the Zoning Bylaw in 2024 – it has already been done.

There was a question regarding short-term rentals. The Planning Commission noted that opinions on STRs are currently divided, so the Planning Commission will have to continue to explore options and maintain a dialog.

Another concern was the proliferation of telecommunications structures. While the Public Utilities Commission maintains control of this, the Town of Danville would like to have a say in the siting process.

It was noted that the bylaws require that new private roads be Class 3, and the action list for the plan called for an inventory of roads and classifications. Members of the regional plan review committee were interested in this, because other communities might benefit from a similar endeavor. (It was noted that Danville has 102 miles of roads!)

The regional review committee commended the Planning Commission for their excellent work. Paul made a motion to recommend approval from the full board of NVDA (they meet on December 12th). Mike seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mike made a motion to close the hearing. The hearing adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Low, NVDA