

# Act 171 Forest Integrity Study Committee

## Meeting Minutes

September 13, 2016, 8:30am - 11:30am

The ANR Montpelier Room, National Life Building, Montpelier

1. The meeting commenced at 8:35am with a welcome from Michael Snyder and introductions.
2. Diane Snelling moved to accept the minutes from the Aug. 18 meeting. Lucy Leriche seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved.
3. Jamey Fidel reviewed the history of the Vermont Forest Roundtable. The committee decided to ask Jamey to coordinate a future Roundtable meeting to respond to ideas presented by the Study Committee. Jamey also agreed to present at the next meeting a summary of Roundtable findings and recommendations to date as well as his overview of approaches to land use regulation from other states.
4. Following a question from Sam Lincoln and discussion about the trends and data that led to the study committee's charge, Sam offered to share the proposed new language regarding forestland zoning and planning in his town (Randolph). This will be posted on the committee's website.
5. Commissioner Snyder reviewed the "2015 Forest Fragmentation Report" and gave a brief history of the 2016 legislative report titled "Recommendations in Support of Forest Health and Integrity". The Study Committee then discussed guidance for municipalities that encourage zoning promoting forest integrity, including examples of subdivision regulations that reduce forest fragmentation and practices that increase the viability of a forest-based economy. Also included in the discussion were proposed revisions to Act 250 triggers, concerns about the effectiveness of Criterion 9(c), and proposed alterations to land use change taxes.
6. Commissioner Snyder requested that study committee members email him before the next meeting a list of proposed recommendations related to changes to municipal land use regulations and Act 250.
7. The group discussed revisions to Act 250 triggers and concerns about the effectiveness of Criterion 9(c).
8. The committee heard public comments and questions from Stephen Webster (landowner) regarding the requirement to file Act 250 Disclosure Statements in town land records prior to the division of land. Stephen Webster also requested that Act 250 triggers caused by roads built above 2,500 feet be addressed by ANR instead of NRB. Pete Gill (NRB) spoke to these road regulations and how they are currently addressed in Act 250. Eric Sorenson (ANR) noted that forest fragmentation and landscape connectivity are issues missing in Act 250 that are addressed in Section 248. Diane Snelling followed up with a question for Eric Sorenson about effectiveness of Section 248.
9. The meeting adjourned at 11:35am.

The next meetings of the study committee will be held in **The Catamount Room** at the Agency of Natural Resources Offices, 1 National Life Drive, Montpelier:

Tuesday, October 18, 8:30am – 11:30am

Friday, November 18, 8:30am – 11:30am

Study committee members in attendance:

Put Blodgett, *Vermont Woodlands Association*

Jamey Fidel, *Vermont Natural Resources Council*

Lucy Leriche, *Agency of Commerce & Community Development*

Sam Lincoln, *Vermont Forest Products Association*

Joe Nelson, *Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Board*

Diane Snelling, *Natural Resources Board*

Michael Snyder, *Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation*

Bonnie Waninger, *Vermont Association of Planning & Development Agencies*

Karen Horn, *Vermont League of Cities and Towns*

Interested parties and State of Vermont Agency staff in attendance:

Billy Coster, *Agency of Natural Resources*

Rebecca Ellis, *Agency of Natural Resources*

Joanne Garton, *Agency of Natural Resources*

Pete Gill, *Natural Resources Board*

Trey Martin, *Deputy Secretary, Agency of Natural Resources*

Matt McMahon, *MMR*

Dan Potter, *Southern Windsor County RPC*

Eric Sorenson, *Agency of Natural Resources*

Steven Webster, *Landowner*