



December 13, 2018

To: Act 47 Commission on Act 250
From: Diane B. Snelling, NRB Chair
Re: Follow up

These comments are offered as a follow up to questions from the Commission about the number of District Coordinators and budget concerns.

The NRB serves nine Act 250 District Commissions through four District Offices, and a Central Office in Montpelier.

The staffing is as follows:

District 1 (Rutland) and District 8 (Bennington) = the Rutland District Office with 1 Coordinator and 1 support Technician

District 2 (Springfield) and District 3 (Windsor) = the Springfield District Office with 2 District Coordinators and 2 support Technicians.

District 4 (Chittenden) = the Essex District Office with 2 District Coordinators (1.75 FTE's) and 2 Support Technician positions (one of which is currently vacant and under recruitment.)

District 5 (Lamoille, Washington), 6 (Franklin) and 9 (Addison) = the Central Vermont District (formerly Barre) with 2 Coordinators and 1 Support Technician.

District 7 (St. Johnsbury) 1 Coordinator and 1 Support Technician.

The Montpelier Central Office, in addition to being home to District 5, houses the NRB Leadership and administrative staff: Chair, Legal Counsel (2 attorneys) and 2 Legal Technicians, Executive Director, Business Director, Project Manager, Compliance & Enforcement Officer, and State Coordinator.

The NRB and Act 250 Budget is comprised of monies (75%) derived primarily through fees (as special fund) totaling just over \$3 million dollars, plus a state appropriation of



approximately \$600,000. Wages and benefits comprise the majority of expenses for the NRB.

Several retirements have offered the NRB an opportunity to consider instituting changes to operations. This has resulted in innovations that include: reassignments of workload to better fit changes within Districts, sharing of work processes across all offices, increased collaboration among staff, and acceleration of efforts to introduce new customer service focused practices.

The Central Office has become a strong support for the District Coordinators and District Commissions. Our General Counsel and Associate General Counsel are available to discuss and advise all levels of the organization. The position of State Coordinator was revived and assumes an ongoing caseload of applications from across the Districts and was modified to work closely with the Executive Director to support and help train District staff.

Additional changes are being instituted to adapt to technological innovations. Act 250 has been a paper process for almost fifty years. We are currently in the process of merging three databases to provide a substantially improved search capacity and finalizing an electronic online application process.

Not everyone agrees with the improvements and changes to the process. Until the Legislature determines a different role for the NRB, Act 250 is able to handle the workflow as demonstrated.

It's true that the current staffing looks different than it has in the past, but the modifications and changes are not a response to budget reductions in the last three years. It's been a process of analysis, consideration and innovation. This has resulted in a conscious management strategy to provide consistency and predictability, for a responsible review of the evidence. We continue to refine this process.

Certainly, any additional responsibilities placed upon the NRB will, however, require a careful review of the budget.

